An analysis of group instrumental teaching : principles, procedures and curriculum implications

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Kevin Thompson

Abstract

Defined in broad terms, group music teaching represents a pattern of working which exploits the musical opportunities and social context of the group itself. It is envisaged that the data gathered in this investigation from empirical statements, case studies and observation of a broad spectrum of group teachers, will contribute towards establishing a clearer perspective, focus attention on and evaluate the techniques and procedures of group tuition. In short, the study is intended to investigate, in an illuminative and interpretative manner, the effectiveness of group work.

A review of the literature attempts to elucidate the central issues and the educational, social and musical justifications for teaching groups.

A major concern is to identify a methodology - practice-based, eclectic and illuminative of music and the learning milieu - with designing a questionnaire; and with selecting for interview acknowledged group teachers. Whilst interviewees differ in approach and on specific details of strategy, all uphold the group teaching premise.

The main body of the text is devoted to abstracted summaries of the interview transcripts, interleaved by brief interim commentaries. This section of the thesis concludes with a synthesis, made possible by means of a Q-sort, and extended interpretation of the transcripts in toto. Thus the transcripts provide both a primary source of opinion and a basis for further evaluation of the principles and procedures of group teaching in action.

To collect empirical data, a case study technique was employed and structured by use of pro formas. Four teachers, chosen on the basis of

specific criteria, were each observed systematically in both group and individual settings. The d ium elicited was then interpreted and summarized.

In conclusion, there is an overview, indicating the place of instrumental music within the total curriculum. The viability of group work is assessed in terms of resources. Scenarios, spanning various types and age-ranges of school provide possible lines of approach and a basis on which to proceed.

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In a text of this length continual dual reference to 'he or she' would soon pall upon the reader. Where, in the interests of style and economy, use has been made only of the masculine personal pronoun the alternative feminine form should be taken as read.

Introduction: recent developments

At the Schools Prom an instrumental ensemble gives a performance of a twentieth-century work. The professionalism is striking; the team-work plain to see. The audience receive the work and its performance with unbridled enthusiasm.

This encouraging picture has to be set against a background of diminishing budgets and reductions in instrumental teaching staff. Whatever else cuts in educational expenditure have threatened, they could prove to be a watershed in instrumental teaching bringing the subject directly into the main forum of educational debate and projecting it into the political arena. Over the last few years we have seen unprecedented media coverage on the subject of instrumental teaching in schools. There have been impassioned, open letters in the quality newspapers - often in response to items carried by those dailies - polemic arguments in the professional journals, and one Authority has put its case in a nationally-networked television documentary. As a springboard to the major premise, we begin with a brief reminder of recent events, as seen through the national press, and by re-examining some of the issues raised by those events.

In 1980 Somerset axed the jobs of its ten full-time and two part-time instrumental teachers; the displaced staff being offered redundancy terms or alternative teaching positions[1]. February 1981 saw the Hereford and Worcester judgement - a cause célèbre - a High Court ruling that local authorities could not charge for instrumental tuition as it could legitimately be regarded as part of the school curriculum. Mark Carlisle was reported to have said at the time that one result of the ruling might

be less individual tuition.[2] Leicestershire, determined to maintain its tradition of the arts as 'an integral part of the schools' programme'[3], launched an appeal with charitable status but other LEA's notably East Sussex, Hertfordshire and North Yorkshire, reduced their instrumental staff.

Just as a number of writers have voiced their anger over recent charges or threats of wholesale cuts, several of which have already been carried out, other writers have drawn attention to more gradual changes: primary schools without a music specialist; the secondary school music teacher who has to spend half his time teaching another subject; his assistant, who formerly took charge of some of the so-called extra-curricular activities, no longer has a job; the music adviser who, in addition to his specialist work load, has to take on inspectorial duties of a general nature[4]; and children directed away from music courses on the pretext that future employers will be unimpressed[5].

Still other writers have taken a dispassionate look not so much at the state of instrumental music but at its raison d'être in the maintained sector. As Milan[6] contends, 'the danger in trying to defend our present position is that we may not stop to ask ourselves where we really want to be'. Of course, our view of where we want to be depends on our vantage point. As Peggie points out:

> If maintaining the status quo is paramount (and in localities where musical activity is flourishing, who is to say this is not important?), then clearly a tendency towards 'privatisation' or self-help will begin to override questions of equal opportunity and educational principle.[7]

Self-help could be found in Surrey which along with other authorities found a legal loophole in the High Court ruling and implemented a scheme whereby a charge was levied on lessons taking place in Music Centres or

on school premises outside of the normal school day. This led to a further furore and a ruling by the DES that the practice of charging for lessons be curtailed as it infringed the 1944 Education Act. Currently, Surrey incensed by the DES ruling and in defiance to the Association of County Councils,is pressing for Government legislation to allow LEA's to charge[8].

The ISM and MU, opposed to a change in law, are firmly committed to the idea of instrumental lessons as a part of a free educational system, not as an 'optional extra'[9]. Their joint campaign spearheaded by distinguished musicians, urges members nationwide to form regional action groups, write protest letters and contact local representatives at the earliest indication of cuts in music tuition[10]. And so the correspondence continues spurred on by the music associations' joint initiative. 'The Surrey gin and Jag set', one writer jibed,is atypical, in a 'different financial league'[11]. At the time of writing this foreword (June 1983) the Borough of Bexley is, for the same reasons as Surrey, to bar all instrumental tuition during school hours.

As the picture begins to define itself we become aware that threats of cuts have prompted people to look afresh at the possibility of integrating, through some form of group teaching, classroom and instrumental lessons. Barnes[12] suggests the peripatetic 'could be given a new role - to class teach music' and Warnock[13] advances the idea further. She puts forward a case for instrumental playing and singing to be taught in classes by peripatetic teachers as a part of a primary school core curriculum. Integration has pervaded recent discussions; it could stand the traditional approach on its head, but nowhere has the subject been opened out as much as in the writings of Peggie and Fletcher.

Although previous writers have aired most of the issues, Peggie[14] is the latest to have given them shape. His article prompted a sharp retort from Fletcher[15] whose counter-argument, denying the value of integration, sets out the case for retention of the present system. That Peggie and Fletcher espouse diametrically-opposed approaches is self-evident but such polarised viewpoints serve to highlight the dilemmas which face us both sides of the divide. How we might go some way to resolving these is discussed later but for the moment the matter is merely raised and left open.

Briefly, Peggie recognises that because there are only limited places for instrumental tuition, it is treated as a privilege and he puts forward a case for change. He goes on to discuss the change process itself - by way of group teaching - the problems it might present, and some of the critical factors involved in overcoming them.

Fletcher too recognises the existence of privilege but accepts it as a precondition. His case, for conservation of the existing set-up, would seem to be based on the notion that specialist skills require specialist teachers. Thus far few would disagree, not even Peggie, who it appears, is not so much arguing for the peripatetic to become a generalist, but for his teaching range to include related instruments, though here Peggie weakens his case by citing those only loosely related. Fletcher continues: 'The advantages of group teaching have been greatly over stated'[16] (sic). Moreover he puts successful group practice down, 'more to the outstanding personality of the teacher than any great inspiration in the method.'

This is, of course, oversimplifying their respective positions but it is reasonable to infer that equality of opportunity, group teaching and

the notion of the instrumental teacher as a specialist are at the kernel of the matter. Regrettably it seems that both writers overstate or at any rate overstress their cases. In consequence each does to some extent controvert his own argument: Peggie in couching his in politically acceptable terms - Fletcher's charge and Peggie does seem vulnerable - as opposed to those that are educationally and musically valid; Fletcher, by failing to concede that the work of the peripatetic is often less than successful. Indeed, by instancing the exemplary teacher - presumably giving individual lessons though he does not say so - he makes precisely the same error that he points out in those propounding group teaching.

In a carefully framed reply, Peggie has attempted to rationalise his faux pas. Fletcher, in the interim has held fast to his views. Both contributions, aside from being colourful and opinionated, have value: Peggie's in putting up for discussion an interesting - though Fletcher would maintain somewhat impractical - alternative to the present set-up which, if adopted as a basis on which to go forward, might meet many of the objectives of music as an activity for all; Fletcher's in acknowledging the importance of the instrumental teacher's distinctive specialist skills. One sees change as imperative and provides a model for integration, the other justifies the existing dual system and makes a passionate plea for its conservation. Whether or not it is possible to reconcile these apparent contradictory perspectives and present a model acceptable to both is a moot point. One thing is certain,these kinds of reasoned arguments merit serious debate. They have lain fallow for too long.

Without pouring scorn on what seem to be piecemeal and déjà vu solutions proffered by Pavey[17] in a follow-up article to those of Peggie

and Fletcher, they do in comparison seem pretty lightweight, indeed quite the weakest so far. In his article, Pavey blurrs the distinction between instrumental peripatetic and class teacher but unfortunately he slides away from the current situation without ever finding an alternative. Moreover, the lessons of Sheila Nelson and the like would seem a wholly successful rebuttal against Pavey's assertions that 'instruments like the violin cannot be taught in classes' and 'too many irrevocable and incurable faults will arise if too many children are involved'. To the extent that we have travelled much of the territory with other writers before, Pavey is disappointingly slack.

Those that have put forward schemes whereby peripatetics teach instrumental music in classes have broken new ground, not least because they recommend and imply methods quite unlike the usual teacher-centred instrumental lesson; they imply passing from mere skill acquisition to discovery and imaginative learning in groups with the teacher acting as a catalyst. The writers recognise group work as one of the keys to integration of classroom and instrumental music. Given some centralised policy either at national or local level, such schemes might stand a chance of implementation, but in a last resort it is the enthusiasm and enterprise of the teachers concerned that will carry through changes in the concept of instrumental music in schools.

The dissemination of good practice is paramount as are fundamental changes in teacher training courses. Tweddell[18] concurs with Peggie,[19] in that he puts the blame for the present system, which draws in only a select minority of pupils and leaves the majority without an outlet for musical expression, with the Conservatoires and Colleges of Education which train potential teachers:

> ...training institutions have (with a handful of exceptions) continued to prepare their students to work with

> an élite of pupils based on those with more often executant skill than imaginative ability... [20]

Further, Tweddell believes that before pressing the case for free instrumental tuition we should look at what may prove to be a commonly held fallacy viz., 'with enough resources, individual instrumental and vocal lessons will succeed with more pupils'.[21] Clearly instrumental music has to justify itself on the same terms as any other would-be ingredient in the curriculum and become a common experience for all. Group lessons could go some way towards achieving that end.

What effect the appointment of Ronald Smith as chief executive of the Associated Board will have on bringing an examination structure - currently concerned only with assessing individuals - together with music education as it takes place in the classroom, remains to be seen. Smith has publicly declared his interest in group instrumental teaching and in establishing a system for assessing playing in ensemble:

> At some stage it must be an advantage to come together. What we presently lack are constructive attitudes to group teaching and the techniques to make it work.[22]

It is with these points in mind that the West Midlands Examinations Board, amongst others, is looking towards group performances but there has been much discussion in examiners' panel meetings with regard to the problem of standardisation.

It is to teaching music to groups that we now turn in the review of the literature together with the educational, social and musical justifications for such an approach. Firstly let us conclude this résumé of recent developments by returning to the picture of the Schools Prom with which we opened. To those involved in such an activity, music is undoubtedly immensely satisfying and could be seen as flourishing but this

is only a part of the total picture. To extend the analogy with the imitative arts: when viewed from a broader perspective, against the background delineated above, the Schools Prom is but a small tableau taking place in a corner of a larger canvas - much of it without definition.

[1] Free Music Lessons Shed
Times Educational Supplement, 28th November 1980 p.6

[2] Passmore, B. Carlisle Fears less Individual Music Tuition after Ruling Times Educational Supplement, 13th March 1981 p.6

[3] Fairbairn, A.N. Music's Rightful Place in Schools (letter)
The Times, 5th January 1983 p.11

[4] Pryce, M.J. Values of Music Teaching at School
Daily Telegraph, 22nd December 1982 p.10

[5] Unleashing Music
The Sunday Times, 5th December 1982 p.4

[6] Milan, K. Adventure or Adieu?
Times Educational Supplement, 2nd April 1982 p.34

[7] Peggie, A. A Chance to Advance
Classical Music, 3rd October 1981 p.15

[8] O'Connor, M. Discord Spread by Cash Dirge
The Guardian, 18th January 1983 p.13

[9] Norman, M. Plea for Schools Music
Daily Telegraph, 3rd December 1982 p.19

[10] Joint Campaign for Music Education
ISM Music Journal, October 1982 p.21

[11] Reid, J. Music in Schools (letter)
The Times, 20th January 1983 p.11

[12] Barnes, L. Some Administrative Aspects of the Selection of Children for Instrumental Music Tuition in English Primary Schools
Educational Management Administration, 10 (1982) pp.243-248

[13]Warnock, M. Paying the Piper
Times Educational Supplement, 13th February 1981 p.64

[14]Peggie, A. Integrating Classroom and Instrumental Teaching
Music Teacher, Vol. 60 No.9 September 1981
pp.14-15

[15]Fletcher, P. An Alternative Viewpoint
Music Teacher, Vol. 61 No.1 January 1982 pp.12-13

[16]Ibid p.12

[17]Pavey, S. Profusion and Confusion in the Classroom
Music Teacher, Vol.61 No.5 May 1982 p.21

[18]Tweddell, P. Music : Pastime for Amateurs
The Guardian, 25th January 1983 p.13

[19]Peggie, op cit. October 1981

[20]Tweddell, op cit.

[21]Ibid

[22]Peggie, A. Change at the Exam Board
Classical Music, 2nd April 1983 p.16

Chapter One

A review of the literature and a preliminary look at the central issues

Group music teaching is neither well-defined nor consistent between teachers. Essentially, it seems to turn on the way in which a teacher is seeking to canalise a natural drive in pupils to interact. It is not merely the economy of teaching the same thing at the same time, in a mechanistic way, it represents a pattern of working that exploits the musical opportunities and social context of the group itself.

In school music the concept exists in curious duality: firstly, group teaching as it takes place in 'creative' music lessons, in which the groups are largely self-selected and self-directed; and secondly, group teaching as given by visiting instrumental teachers to a group that is usually teacher-selected and teacher-directed, albeit in a less didactic sense. Although superficially the two kinds of activities may appear wildly dissimilar they share two important traits: a willingness of the members of a group to co-operate with each other; and a sense of corporateness which is essential in preserving a group intact. It is precisely these that make for effective group teaching. In the group situation the teacher encourages interaction among the pupils. There is a natural trade-off of competition and co-operation, each player sparking off responses from the others not vying to outdo them. Fundamentally group teachers are not seeking to leave out but rather lead out (educere) the individual in the true sense of the word education.

The group teaching approach may be justified on educational, social and musical tenets:

- .music and learning take place in a social context
- .there are social advantages to be gained from the camaraderie of the group, in particular, confidence, support and sensitivity
- .it teaches individuals to co-operate and assists the process of socialising

.it goes beyond the limits of a syllabus into the field of social education
.children learn not only from the teacher but from their peers by listening, observing, discussing and participating
.imitation and emulation are particularly strong within a peer-group
.so much can be taught as easily to several as to one: aural training, notation, kinaesthetic dexterity and so on, especially at the elementary stage
.the individual learns from the mistakes of others
.the individual becomes more tolerant of criticism and learns to accept it
.the group offers a source of reference against which the individual is able to compare and measure his own standard
.it provides the beginnings of ensemble playing
.the group enables the teacher to widen the range of skills taught to include improvisation, harmonisation and accompaniment

Sociologists who have studied the behaviour of small groups have found that over a period of time the participants assume different roles. There is, apparently, an 'energizer' impelling the group into action, an 'information-seeker', an 'information-giver', and 'initiator-contributor', who puts forward new ideas; an 'elaborator', an 'opinion-giver', and a 'critic' who points out the flaws or assesses the value of contributions from the others. Noticeably, the opinion-giver and the critic assume quite different roles; presumably the former is a private assessment whereas the latter is public? The remainder of the group is directed towards the maintenance of group solidarity. There is a 'harmoniser' to reconcile disagreements, an 'expediter' and an 'encourager'. Experienced group music teachers seem to take on these roles when they are not supplied by the students.

Obviously central to any concept of group teaching is the role of the teacher and success depends ultimately upon him exploiting the advantages of the group situation, preparing carefully, knowing constantly the next step and having the ability to pick up on a discovery or chance remark made by a member of the group and turn it to the advantage of the rest.

We can with some probability infer that such teachers are rare. As Peggie[1] points out, group teaching 'requires a teacher to acquire certain skills not traditionally associated with instrumental teaching in this country.'

Claudia Clarke[2] examines the disparity between the peripatetic instrumental instructor and the qualified class teacher. She calls for more courses, especially those of a part-time nature, in which qualified teacher status can be obtained. In essence this seems an admirable and plausible scheme though many of the peripatetics of today are already qualified in the sense of having teaching certificates; no, the issue is deeper than the qualified, unqualified argument as we hope to show. Nevertheless a music adviser in discussing two instrumental teachers, one considered successful, the other less so, remarked that the former was a teacher whereas the latter was a performer! Not surprisingly, Sheila Nelson and Robert Spencer, to mention but two, manage to combine both roles.

With the exception of a few renowned, charismatic people who have been working in this way for some years now, the majority of instrumental teachers have still no inkling of effective group practice, yet pressure is mounting and inevitably lack of public money will be the biggest single factor that will drive LEA's to take a closer look at what is actually involved in group work.

The survey by Sergeant (1979) gathered information of student admissions for music in courses of initial training and details of the organisation of music courses but did not consider the potential instrumental teacher, though in a later article (1981) he recognised the need:

> for a single honours professional degree course in instrumental teaching - one which might go some way towards integrating instrumental and class teaching in a more meaningful way.[3]

Similar viewpoints have been expressed by others. Such a course would presumably be c ncerned to a large extent with the techniques and procedures of teaching in groups.

In the conservatoires of America and Europe - Paris, Brussels and Vienna* - teaching in groups is assessed at a higher worth by far than in the colleges of this country where a policy of 'splendid isolation', jarringly out of synch with the political tenor of the day, still persists and it will be a long haul practically speaking before the alternatives are explored, Kenneth van Barthold notwithstanding.

Naturally whilst the American experience is somewhat different, it shares much of its early antecedents with Europe. Early American colleges of music staffed by European émigrés emulated the famous state conservatoires, each student being taught individually but in front of his colleagues, an approach which became known as the 'class conservatory method'. Balch writing in 1868 provides some insight into the rationale, a view which stresses discrimination:

> By the participation of several in the same studies, a true musical feeling is awakened and ke t fresh among the pupils; it promotes industry and spurs on the emulation, it is a preservative against the one-sidedness of education and taste - a tendency against which every artist, even in the student years, should be on his guard.[4]

An earlier caveat might well have been extended to guard against fraudulent teachers, in particular one Johann Bernard Logier who taught piano classes in Dublin in 1815. It is hardly surprising that with the strong Irish American connections which have existed, teachers from the

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*At the Konservatorium der Stadt Wien students are taught individually; children in groups of between 12 and 15.

United States enrolled in his classes. Logier, a German by birth, had travelled to Ireland as a military bandsman where he rapidly established classes for piano teachers. A charlatan, his so-called 'system' seems to have been more arithmetical than educative or musical. He took the quantity notion of the Industrial Revolution to absurd lengths and is reputed to have taught between twenty and thirty students at a time. Seemingly, most of his students accepted the size of the classes without demur. In spite of accusations of sharp practice it seems he could play the piano at least to some extent and he attracted a sufficiently large clientele to earn himself a small fortune. Whatever else he did Logier saw the potential of such an approach. One wonders what part he might have played had he been able to demonstrate that potential.

Interestingly, one of his exponents, Samuel Webb, allied himself to Friedrich Kalkbrenner, who at the age of twelve had taken the coveted first prize at the Paris Conservatoire, newly-founded by another military bandsman Sarrette[5]—many of whose former colleagues were appointed to its staff. Jointly, Webb and Kalkbrenner, opened a piano class 'academy' in London off Russell Square, near the site of what is now the Institute of Education.

Nowadays with a few notable exceptions, Schmidt a clarinettist who in 1971 undertook a tour of the major European conservatoires and flautist Bang, (1970) who herself studied with Gaston Crunelle at the Paris Conservatoire, most American group teachers have moved away from the traditional class conservatory model of dyadic interaction of teacher and student - a private lesson conducted in the presence of a group of students - to an aggregate approach whereby interaction between all the members of the group is encouraged, each student in turn becoming player,

auditor and contributor.

Even in America comparatively little attention has been given to research specifically into group teaching in music. A computer search could muster only a handful of directly relevant references. Of the few studies located, all North American, the results would seem somewhat contradictory and aptly demonstrate the equivocality of research findings. Consider the following in which there is at least some measure of agreement.

Investigating the effect of group and individual piano instruction on musical achievement as determined by aural discrimination, knowledge of musical symbols, sight reading, transposition, and improvisation, Rogers[6] found that group-taught students scored significantly higher on all five variables than did students who received individual instruction. Diehl[7], on the other hand, investigating the effectiveness of group and individual instruction on young beginners using an electropiano lab., found that whilst there were no differences in aural discrimination, knowledge of music symbols and transposition, group-taught subjects made fewer errors in public performance and were better sight readers.

Some studies serve to qualify rather than counter others, for example: In a survey by Corder[8] of music faculty staff in North American universities and colleges, respondents agreed that whilst a group approach could save instructional time, there was less time for individual attention. In a similar vein Richards[9], in a study of trends of piano class instruction, postulated that 'in a group setting less individual attention is a decided advantage'. Interestingly, the latter is the earlier of the two studies. The statement from the former, about a group approach saving overall instructional time but there being less time for

individual attention, would seem irrefutable.

In Britain there has been a tradition of class string teaching which stems back to McNaught in the 1870's, to Hullah Brown in the 'thirties who is perhaps chiefly remembered nowadays for having devised 'violinda', through to Edwina Palmer and Gertrude Collins, teachers associated with the Rural Music Schools' Association whose enlightened attitude to class teaching has been remarkable. Mary Ibberson, first director of the RMSA, writes of its small beginnings in 1927:

> We considered... the possibility of teaching the string instruments in groups or small classes. This would cost less for each student and make better use of the teacher's time. It would have social advantages too, since most people like to work in groups.[10]

Whether we call them groups or classes is a semantic quibble but the reference to work is perhaps more significant than first appears. Mass production, inherent in the Industrial Revolution which antedated the RMSA, had accustomed people to working in substantial numbers. Though evidently less apparent in the outlying country areas later served by the RMSA, the attitude and spirit was abroad and the social upheaval widespread.

The Industrial Revolution brought with it wealthy industrial benefactors who purchased for their workforce instruments specifically designed to be played in groups. Many of today's renowned all-brass bands stem directly from these nineteenth-century brass and wind groups, which came into being largely through the philanthropic attitude and desire of mill millionaires and cotton kings that their workers should spend their all-too-scant leisure time in worthwhile pursuits. Contemporaneously, the evangelical movement with its adult literacy schools brought people together for the first time in classes,

primarily for Bible reading but also for choral singing. Such then was the climate of the times which preceded the founding of the RMSA.

More directly pertinent than industrial phenomena in terms of the RMSA's fundamental commitment to class teaching, was the fact that Mary Ibberson, a pianist, and her partner and mainstay at the RMSA, Edith Grubb, a pianist and cellist, each studied on the Continent. The former was taught piano in a group at the Conservatorium in Dresden whilst the latter studied cello at the Berlin Hochschule. Thus here are direct links with the European conservatoire model. Whether or not these links were thought to be significant at the time is not easy to assess retrospectively, but the very awareness of an alternative approach to instrumental teaching than that practised in the colleges of this country, of being au fait with the European model, must have been formative to the RMSA's class precepts.

Currently the RMSA, in collaboration with its sister organisation the Association of Woodwind Teachers, is in the throes of producing a discussion paper on wind class teaching which is to be followed in the near future by a major national project on the subject.[11]

However active the RMSA has been in disseminating class instrumental teaching through its short training courses, its influence has permeated only outside of the major colleges of music, which to this day remain convinced of the efficacy of the single student tutorial. This alone seems to relegate group teaching to some sort of minor or inconsequential status.

Students who have been trained in a music college have been apprenticed to masters of one instrument or another and have experienced a style of teaching renowned for its eccentricity and irrational beliefs.

Often techniques which the students have acquired over several years are abandoned glibly in favour of the master's own style and the students become disillusioned feeling that they have wasted valuable learning time. Yet the notion of apprenticeship, almost a throwback to the articled pupils of the nineteenth century, continues. As Diehl contends:

> The role of master-teacher has enjoyed an undisturbed aura of emulation and respect... Even today, one of the tickets to recognition and success for an aspiring musician is to have been a student of a teacher of international recognition and prestige.[12]

This leads students to decry the importance of learning with and from their peers. Unless their teacher is prepared to play frequently during the course of the lesson, and some teachers have retired from active music-making by the time they are established at Conservatoires, the students have little on which to model themselves save some vague idea of an absolute.

Potential teachers are required to master their instrument and learn a method of teaching it at the same time. Even highly motivated students commonly find that their all-too-brief one year Certificate of Education course cannot give them the familiarity with group teaching strategies which enables them to work confidently. Here, in-service training, perhaps during the induction year, would appear to have an important role to play. In many initial courses little, if any, training is given in group methods. Few students have any experience of working with or in a group teaching situation; they simply expect to teach in the same way they were taught themselves - privately.

Similarly, practice is often thought of as a private activity; the learner shuts himself off with his instrument and music and proceeds to master the instrument alone emerging only when his standard is considered

publicly acceptable. It is evident that the greater part of practice is best carried out in this fashion but there are limitations to this way of working. Swanwick[13] suggests that solitary instrumental lessons followed by lonely practice may account for the fact that, 'the trained musician is often unable to contribute musically to those situations in which he finds himself that are outside the context of the organised concert or recital.' And so the circle continues: private lessons followed by private practice resulting in still more private teachers some of whom have a vested interest in preserving the present system intact and have already shown considerable resistance to group teaching methods.*

Clearly then we need to develop new patterns of training our instrumental teachers. Yvonne Enoch[14] believes that 'in order to become a successful group teacher it is essential to learn how to do it before starting' and that view is re-echoed time and time again. All instrumentalists preparing to teach, and possibly those intending not to do so, ought to be given the opportunity of observing an experienced group teacher at work over a period of time. From observing to working with a group of two or three children lies a very short step and one which, without over simplifying the case, even uncertain students could manage. Naturally, the techniques of working effectively with a group take time to build up; the players will need to get to know each other and to lose their initial shyness. Plainly, there is no one way of working, there are only effective and ineffective ways. The nature of the activity is such that the teacher should be able to assert himself as a group leader when it is necessary to guide and direct them, and at other times take

*ISM Conference of the Music in Education Section : Instrumental Group 1979.

his place as another group member. He has to be something of a tactician in ensuring that no one player takes the lion's share and that a healthy competitiveness does not build up into competitive tension. It is a question of subtle inter-relations and balance.

It is essential that all the players are involved all the time by listening, observing, rehearsing fingering patterns when someone else is playing, score reading and criticising, but without causing resentment in their friends. Rather than submitting their work to the teacher for approval,the emphasis is on working toward a situation in which the children themselves come to rely upon their own initiative. In this sense the group constitutes its own critic and though criticism is not the exclusive preserve of the teacher, he ensures that what is said is right and appropriate and that it is made constructively and thoughtfully. Interestingly,Suzuki, whose method is individual although there are regular group meetings, places considerable emphasis on reflective thought and judgement. Naturally, this comes about gradually in the group situation: one would want to avoid the facile assumption that self-criticism can be applied willy-nilly.

Peter Shave[15] maintains that 'there is a teaching dynamic that you can only get with a group.' The support given to one another and degree of security felt by the group en masse,reduces the individual player's anxiety and makes him less submissive and withdrawn towards the teacher. It can be a triumph to tackle a part another found too difficult and ego-deflating to attempt a piece played well by someone else. Music is being learned within a social setting,the antithesis of which is a series of five-minute lessons wherein children constantly to and fro and interaction is confined to the corridor.

Social interaction implies action between all the members of the group, it is not only the polarised, dyadic interaction of teacher and pupil. It requires action and reaction and can be viewed as patterns and developmental sequences of communications both verbal and non-verbal. Writings on social interaction in groups have tended to centre on two distinct areas: sociometry, the study of the network of friendships in a group; and a branch of social psychology concerned with what are known as T-groups (T is short for training) or group dynamics.

Sociometric tests provide a measure of the mutual acceptance and rejection of each other by individuals in relation to specific activities. Each person in the group is asked to list in order of preference those with whom he would like to work, and those members with whom he does not wish to work. The sociometrician insists that the lists of likes and dislikes are, and are seen to be, secret. From these lists sociograms are constructed showing the direction of choice.

In recent years sociometry has become something of a cult inasmuch as social interaction is thought desirable per se. It has become the main aim, and the achievement of a tangible learning outcome, whether it be playing the clarinet in ensemble or getting to grips with a learning problem through group discussion, is a vehicle, a by-product or considered secondary to social interaction. Furthermore, sociometry concerned as it is with the individual's acceptance or rejection by other members of the group, tends to overemphasize popularity. It is often the case that those who are most liked and readily accepted by the other group members are unlikely to take on a leader role: individuals who assert themselves tend to meet with opposition and hostility from their counterparts.

Sociometric methods did, however, lead to further research on group teaching, in particular to the well-known, classic 'autocratic - laissez-faire - democratic' experiments of Lewin, Lippitt and White[16] (1939). In comparing autocratic groups in which the leader decided all policies, with democratic groups where policies were decided by group discussion; they found the former hostile and critical to each other though submissive towards the leader, whilst the latter were friendly and co-operative. Under autocratic leadership, children worked reasonably well so long as the leader remained in the room, whereas under democratic leadership the level of work remained consistent whether or not the leader was present. Laissez-faire leadership resulted in spasmodic work, greater work being done when the leader was absent. Subsequent experiments have confirmed their basic findings, but for the present we intend to confine our attention to the experiments carried out by Deutsch[17] (1949).

Establishing two types of classroom attitudes, one co-operative the other competitive, Deutsch told students in some groups that their grades for a course on psychology would be determined by the general quality of the group discussion, each member receiving a group mark; while the members of other groups were told that their grades depended on their own individual contributions and that they would be ranked in order of merit. Thus co-operative groups depended for high grades on the whole group contributing well to the discussion, whilst competitive groups depended on individual members outshining one another. As one would expect the results showed that the co-operative were able to communicate with each other more effectively than the competitive groups; they considered the contributions of others in their own comments and they

were more friendly. But perhaps the more significant, overriding outcomes of the experiment were qualitative: the ideas produced by the co-operative group were of a higher standard than those produced by the competitive group. The last finding raises several implications for those teachers of music who attach prime importance to competitiveness as an incentive to learning.

The antithesis of competitiveness is the T-group. These are entirely experiential, formed with the express intention of enabling the members to learn about their relationships with each other and so the emphasis is on group interaction rather than learning. Participants are encouraged to speak freely and openly about their relationships with others. By observing how their behaviour is affecting one another they become aware of what were hitherto 'blind' areas of their behaviour. The T-group helps individuals to diagnose their behaviour and to recognise the effects it is having on others. Many of us have recognised our own particular 'blind'areas in music as a result of playing with others.

T-groups originated in the United States. They were developed for training social workers and industrialists though attempts have been made to apply their methods in this country to university teaching most notably at East Anglia. However peripheral and inconsequential sociometric data and T-group theories seem to group teaching in music, they do serve to remind us of the individual's need for social recognition and acceptance and in that respect the data and the theories hold good.

In any group situation, be it music or otherwise, the individual expects some level of recognition and acceptance. If this is lacking, and there are not sufficient compensatory satisfactions within the group

itself, opting out will enhance a student's asocial image more than staying in and withdrawal, either sooner or later, is likely. What effect withdrawal has on the rest of the group is a matter for conjecture. Evidently much will depend on his relationship to the other members and their own stickability. To prevent players from giving up once the group is established,some teachers involve as many as thirty children at a time during a trial period to give them a chance to experience the instrument without committing themselves for a number of years. In particular, Manchester has a pyramidal structure from 'taster' courses, through group teaching to junior exhibitions, the apex of the pyramid.

Withdrawal is less likely to arise if we establish the right kind of social climate: if apart from ensuring that the group is working as a co-operating whole, we observe the interaction of the group members; if we are aware of the contribution of the individual, and if he in turn is aware of the contribution of other individuals in the group. As in any social situation the activity is shared and all the stronger for that. Julia Lee believes the activity to be almost therapeutic:

> Coming to a group in which everyone shares a common interest, and being able to discuss a variety of topics in a friendly, informal way gives an extra zest to their lives.[18]

Teachers in one New York school[19] for emotionally disturbed girls, claim that the electronic piano class causes more social-mindedness than any other experience in the school. Such positive behavioural change is a bold claim indeed,though it does reinforce received truth and pithy axioms about the social advantages of music making.

Plato held that the great value of music lay in its social values. Music expresses itself through group activity and we avail ourselves of group motivation in orchestras, bands and choirs. For many people these

provide an opportunity for participation in a group activity as a social as well as a musical outlet. But we must remember that such social values, however desirable they appear, are extrinsic, essentially non-musical and a part of the multi-faceted nature of music. The value of group lessons must be derived not from a group activity alone but, more essentially, from a musical activity.

It is possible to envisage a situation in which, in an attempt to promote social interaction, education has become a side issue and what was formerly a means has now become an end, although it is doubtful whether this is significant in group music lessons. In a discussion group the conversation can all too easily become anecdotal and only slightly related to the subject under consideration. In music lessons the sheer presence of instruments and music is a constant reminder of exactly what we are there for. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the activity could turn into a kind of talent competition whereby each act outshines the previous one and the result is little more than pure entertainment.

Conversely, there is the thorny issue of group teaching and examinations. It could be that conventional tests of achievement, constructed to measure individual development, are not sufficient by themselves to assess in a satisfactory manner the achievements of group-taught children. Conventional music examinations neglect many of the qualities group teachers would regard as important. With any type of group work learning outcomes are compounded and so determining them is far from straightforward.

Learning outcomes or 'specifications' as they are known, are crucial factors governing the success of teaching in groups. If the members of

a group have a clear idea beforehand of what they are attempting to achieve, beyond the ultimate ambition of 'playing the violin' but more specifically perhaps improving the hand position or using more bow, each member can then exercise his or her own initiative toward attaining those goals. As regards determining whether or not the goals have been reached it is conceivable that, since group teachers are encouraging in children self-critical attitudes, they may well argue that the group should assess itself, though clearly there are ways of steering the players in the right direction and helping them recognise certain shortcomings. Any music teacher has in the back of his mind some sort of yardstick against which he measures the musicianship, aural skills, techniques and areas of theoretical knowledge; it is part of the skill of teaching.

If one believes as Clarke[20] does, that the 'actual teaching skills involved in group instrumental teaching are just as great as those involved in general class teaching', though it is worth remembering that the teaching situations are not analogous, then the peripatetic is to be regarded as a professional on a par with the school music teacher and accordingly, he should be afforded equal facilities and space on the timetable. Too often we are faced with a stereotype, the image of the peripatetic who has a highly developed sense of territoriality rather than professionalism, who comes and goes at odd times of the day and whose cabal meets weekly in the broom cupboard under the staircase.

The view is confirmed from many sources that follow-up work, given by the school music teacher at some other time during the week, is beneficial both in maintaining interest and speeding progress; particularly so in the early stages. At other practice times certain players may choose to pair up together but some will expect the weekly

group lesson and follow-up to provide them with all they need. Such children may hold back the rest, or an especially bright or less able child could upset the balance of the group so that he makes it difficult to work with. Reciprocally, it could be that an especially bright child will have a strong 'pacing' effect on the others. These are clearly important questions which can only be answered by a detailed and documented study of group teaching.

But whilst disparate standards may affect the manageability of a group, there is some evidence to suggest that the particular make-up of personalities within a group is of little consequence. Suchor,[21] in a study of the composition of piano groups, found no difference in effectiveness - as measured by performance quality, student satisfaction and problem solving - between equally-mixed, heterogeneous groups containing a balanced number of personality opposites and control, homogeneous groups. With the exception of Suchor's study, little attention has been given to the heterogeneity or homogeneity of personalities within instrumental groups. The variables usually considered significant are homogeneity of standard, age, and the size of the group. Nevertheless the possibility of an additional variable, personality, was surely a line worth pursuit.

The problem of different standards within a group can be overcome, to some extent, by the natural division of labour in music. Players will accept the importance of playing perhaps a drone bass or simple pizzicato accompaniment to the totality of the piece. The brass band is perhaps the most obvious example of a homogeneous unit in which there is a natural progression of skills and whereby players can move up or down the band according to their standard.

Of course, brass band instruments are especially viable taught in groups. The instruments are closely related, fingering patterns are identical and, excepting bass trombone, treble clef is used throughout the band. Private or individual lessons are almost unheard of. Most players are 'taught' the basics in small groups, and then placed next to someone more experienced in the band. Learning from others, a practice which formerly was used extensively in industry, and known colloquially as 'learning from Nelly', is a key process factor. In the case of the brass band, parallels with industry are, as we have seen, especially germane. Some might say that professional orchestral brass players from this kind of background are remarkable not because of early group playing but in spite of it. Anyone who has undergone this kind of learning will know that it is casual, opportunistic, learning advances tend to come irregularly - but then they do in any case. It can also be an expedient, enjoyable mode of learning. What is experienced can often be retained in a way that solitary learning cannot, undoubtedly because of the social context in which it takes place, and because the experiences are sharable. It is as if such shared experiences stimulate the mind in a way that is different from individual learning. It turns you out of yourself.

A brass band is of a standard size and make-up, but what of the size of instrumental teaching groups? There appear to be two considerations: firstly, that the group should be small enough to enable the teacher to attend to individuals when necessary, yet large enough to prevent them from becoming inhibited. Secondly, as the group progresses, the time required for individual attention is likely to increase so perhaps smaller groups are more manageable at a more advanced stage. Research by Jackson[22] (1980) has shown that the size of a piano class does not

affect achievement in beginners, though the number of students in any one group tested did not exceed eight. Sheila Nelson teaches violin groups ranging from six to thirty-five in number. Clearly it is as difficult to generalise about ratios as it is to generalise about attitudes to group tuition. Which brings us to our final point: group tuition as a means or an end?

Many parents and some teachers regard group tuition as somehow compensatory for the individual attention of the private lesson. It is seen as Milan[23] points out, as 'an unfortunate if necessary means to an end, to be phased out as soon as possible, and only rarely as an end in itself.' However, a growing number of teachers are committed to the extent that they no longer give individual lessons. It is perhaps significant that a Japanese musical instrument firm is grasping with considerable alacrity the concept of group teaching in its music schools. The reasons it expresses are to do with pupils learning in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and fun. Whatever the ostensible reasons, there are clearly additional economic considerations. Nevertheless the firm would hardly take the trouble to extensively re-train its teachers - including in many cases a study visit to America or Japan - nor invest in the way in which it is doing if it did not consider group tuition to be a viable proposition.

The present chapter is but a preliminary look at the central issues involved in teaching music to groups. In order that many of these issues can be examined more closely at a later point, it is necessary to turn in the next chapter towards a methodology.

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Chapter Two

2.1 Identifying a methodology

Whereas experimental methodology is of an asocial type,the conceptual structure of a methodology concerned with group teaching must reflect, rather than by-pass, human interaction. It is precisely this which characterises teaching in groups and gives it its strength. The methodology must therefore be practice-based, eclectic and illuminative of music and the learning milieu. It seems to lie outside of the agricultural-botany paradigm and is essentially qualitative rather than quantitative, though naturally one quantifies in the sense of gathering data. A study of this kind is anthropological, social-philosophical in perspective and involves a number of techniques, viz: interviews and conversations; case studies and observations; interpretation and speculation. The end product should be beyond numbers, interpretative and insightful.

There seemed to be two possible lines of approach: one in which the writer postulated a number of hypotheses about teaching in groups; and another whereby the hypotheses of group teachers themselves were taken as starting points. Either way, practice would be observed systematically over a period of time in the form of case studies and interpreted to determine the validity of the beliefs and assumptions underpinning the practice.

Key to case study work is that the data can be written in a way that is understood and can be assessed by practising teachers. If in the past teachers of music have been distant from the 'educational mainland', then visiting instrumental teachers have been especially remote; it is this that has made implementing innovations in instrumental teaching difficult.

Parenthetically, case study work keeps the researcher firmly rooted in the actuality of group/music/teacher, and with what is practically possible.

Several well-known group teachers have already shown the way forward but the implications of their success would seem to be that these teachers possess qualities which are not generally found in others. One suspects that there are not sufficient teachers around of the right quality to put over a structured group course. Teachers less experienced in group work are often encountered trying to operate in a way they do not fully understand themselves; new teaching strategies are not, after all, easy to learn, especially when one has spent years acquiring skills of a different kind. But whilst no two situations are alike, there are surely a significant number of techniques and ways of working concomitant with good practice, and within the capabilities of many teachers, that are broad enough to apply to most situations.

It would have been naive to assume that an approach to teaching in groups, could be reduced to a simple rule-of-thumb method, practical considerations would impinge and bring any such idea quickly back to earth. For instance, the rate of presentation, whether or not the group could cope with a new fingering in a given week, would depend on physiological and intellectual capabilities to mention but two. It was clear then, that what was needed was not one teacher's account of how to teach groups, which, if implemented in an undiluted form, would in all probability be inimical to innovative practice, but a collection of well-documented principles and procedures that would form the basis of effective group teaching.

2.2 Designing the questionnaire

Whilst a formal questionnaire might have proved useful in obtaining quantitative information, it was felt that an open-ended and discursive form of interview would be more illuminative and give interviewees the opportunity of expressing their views clearly and at length. However, to focus the discussions and to avoid accumulating masses of uninterpretable data, a questionnaire was formulated, the design of which was structured with certain criteria in mind:firstly, to establish a rapport,questions were framed in an amicable, conversational manner; secondly, use was made in sequencing the questions of the familiar 'funnel' approach with 'filter' questions, that is starting in a broad, general way and narrowing down to more specific points. The questionnaire was further structured by subdividing it into ten categories: antecedents; rationale; organisation; constitution of the group; materials; methodology; social interaction; teacher skills; development; and learning outcomes. To show clearly points of contrast and comparison between the views expressed, these ten subdivisions were retained in the abstracted summaries.

In addition to the questions listed the interviewees were encouraged to make comments and air observations they felt to be important. A copy of the questionnaire has been placed in appendix A (pp.357-361).

2.3 Selecting interviewees

Seeking out group teachers for interview was a gradual, cumulative process. A letter was drafted, designed to make preliminary contact with prospective interviewees and inviting them to participate (see p.379 appendix E). All those contacted save one - whose anxieties were allayed

only after firing a broadside and who eventually acceded to the writer's requests, unhesitatingly offered to take part. Some of the interviewees, the names of whom are frequently in print, were perhaps obvious choices. But to take as a primary source of opinion only those who had written extensively on their approaches, would have been a philosophical non sequitur. It would have resulted in little more than repetition of received opinion from standard sources. Further, as it was reasonable to expect the range of committed group teachers to be immeasurably wider than the few who had published their views, there was a concern that those whom hitherto had been unvocal but who had a potential contribution to make, should also be represented. Inevitably, the problem was one of reaching them, of finding the pearl within the oyster. Fortunately there is something of a group teaching network made up of those who believe in a particular way of working, pursuing it unceasingly over a number of years. Those encountered in the interviews almost always knew each other either as friends or acquaintances. Often they knew, or had heard by word of mouth, of someone else teaching in the same way, though perhaps working with different instruments from their own. Amongst others, LEA music advisers, the Rural Music Schools Association, independent music schools Kent and Dorset, helped by supplying names of people who were known to group teach. From the few contacted initially who were widely held to be group teachers, the list snowballed to fourteen and began to read like a veritable 'who's who in group teaching.'

2.4 Carrying out the interviews

Interviews were conducted over a five month period in various parts of the country (see log appendix A p.362). Where possible observation of the

interviewees teaching groups was arranged at the same time. With the interviewees' consent, the interviews were recorded on to cassette (90 mins.). This allowed the writer freedom to listen, absorb and at the same time comment throughout the interview, without the distraction of attempting to take copious notes. Points could be clarified, issues could be redefined, problem areas could be pinpointed, advantage could be taken of serendipity, extempore questions could be put: 'Is that another way of saying...?' 'How would you counter claims..?' In brief, the discussions - for the interviews became that - could be sharpened and focused. Without the tape recorder it would have been all to easy to miss the opportunity of pursuing some potentially interesting perhaps related if not directly relevant issues - several of which are reserved for separate consideration in the written commentaries which interleave the transcripts. Conversely, it allowed the writer to politely interject at an opportune moment if the interviewee began to wander too far from the point in question. Furthermore, the very act of switching on the machine seemed to be taken as a signal to curtail pleasantries and introductory preamble.

The interviews were intended to be of an hour's duration; some were less, most were more. Often, protracted yet relaxed post-interview conversations would reveal important aspects which otherwise might have been overlooked; these too were spliced into the transcripts. Some interviewees,prompted only by the introductory topic question in each section,proceeded to anticipate the related questions en route. Others answered laconically each question in turn. All kept within the overall structure of the questionnaire.

Chapter Three

3.1 Making the transcripts

The interviews were written up in the form of abstracted summaries. Deciding what should remain and what ought to be edited out was always problematic, essentially it was governed by relevance, tact and discretion. Sensitive, carefully-pared honest writing was the intention, whether it was fulfilled the interviewees alone can decide. However, as only rarely does speech fall into the pattern of written sentences, in the transcripts the writer is paraphrasing not quoting. They are in effect, considered replies. Much as we would have wished to present verbatim reports, because of the elliptical way in which people converse it would have been difficult to grasp the full import of a transcript reading a literal, word-for-word account. Thus, whilst it was necessary in the interests of clarity and economy to reword or re-phrase much of the prose, care was taken to remain as faithful to the original as possible so as not to put on a construction which was unintended.

Sometimes interviewees would illustrate the points they were making by gesture or expression. Where these amplified, threw light on or were crucial to the content of what was being said, attempts were made to transmute them into an appropriate word or phrase. By way of example, one of the interviewees, incidentally something of a Francophile, in describing the atmosphere generated within a particular group at the Paris Conservatoire, made a sudden wordless gesture, a rapid shivering movement to suggest the thrill or electricity of the moment. Whilst the words 'shiver' or 'thrill' may have been adequate if somewhat prosaic, they hardly expressed the nuance of the gesture, 'frisson' did. Similarly, a look, a raised eyebrow, a shrug, or a refusal to talk of themselves spoke volumes. Occasionally, interviewees would remember

something germane to a point made earlier perhaps after the subject in question had long passed, so the extra information had to be placed in context and pieced together to form a coherent argument.

3.2 Returning the transcripts for retrospective editing

To avoid misunderstandings and to clear up any ambiguities in the text, transcripts were returned together with a covering letter (see p.380 appendix E) for retrospective editing. After a reasonable period of time had elapsed - usually six to eight weeks - interviewees who had not replied were reminded with a polite 'chaser'. Where necessary an amended copy in draft form was returned a second time for verification. In this way control of the data was shared and any release of the material for future publication, in any form, would necessarily be negotiated with the interviewees. In point of fact, few blue-pencilled any of the transcripts, most extended the text, amplified particular issues, disentangled complexities and in so doing, unravelled more of their essential approaches. The response from the interviewees in terms of accepting the interpretations was encouraging.

3.3 The Q-sort

To facilitate comparisons, pinpoint areas of overlap and see quickly the range and frequency of particular issues made in the interviews, use was made of a technique borrowed from personality testing known as the Q-sort. Originally a personality inventory in which the testee - or someone making judgements about him - sorted a number of statements written on cards into categories according to the different concepts represented, the Q-sort was designed to indicate the relative strength

within an individual of a particular quality or trait. Thus the technique enabled the subject, by sorting descriptive statements into those he believed true of him and those he believed false, to build up a picture of his own personality, that is a self-concept.

Clearly, the purpose of the Q-sort in this study was not to assess certain traits within each of the fourteen disparate interviewees, nor to determine an archetypal group teacher from which others could copy, but to build a composite picture of the principles and procedures of teaching groups. The advantages of Q-sorting are that by reducing data to a number of short, separate statements, issues can be compared or countered by opposite viewpoints, parallels between the various interviewees can readily be drawn and the data can be restructured into an organised and manageable whole.

To this end, précis of salient points made by each of the fourteen interviewees were written on cards - each point on a separate card (p.363). The cards were coded in two ways: by the initials of the interviewee to enable the interviewee to be identified immediately; and by the original category, indicated by the first (lower case) letter, to which the statement belonged. Two category headings began with the letter m, materials and methodology, so the former was indicated by the letter m, and the latter by the first two letters, me. In addition to the card index, personal lists were made in order to see the range and number of issues made by each interviewee.

Such a sizeable sample with highly articulate interviewees, amassed a huge quantity of data - two card indexes and over six hundred cards were necessary (p. 364). It would have been almost impossible to interpret the data without being selective. To determine which issues were worth

pursuing as major foci of the study and to keep a consistent intelligence of purpose, the sort was carried out in three stages: firstly, generally into the ten categories of the questionnaire; secondly, specifically into clusters of like ideas central to the main thesis; and finally, by taking out of sequence interesting side issues. Even at the first stage some cards were re-categorised according to whether the points at issue were more or less pertinent to one of the ten different categories represented. At times there appeared to be something of a false dichotomy; should we categorise under this heading or that, and clearly much depended on how the ten headings were defined. Furthermore, by taking out of context and reducing what sometimes amounted to an entire paragraph into a single line sentence, the statements read like unqualified value-judgements unsupported by logic or reason, hence the necessity - if the work were to remain accurate and consensual - for presenting the full text of the interviews within the main body of the thesis.

Chapter Four

Interview transcripts and interim commentaries

Taken together the brief interim commentaries which interleave the transcripts serve to point up contrasts or similarities between the viewpoints expressed, reflect on the interview or observation of the interviewee, bring in side issues and draw together any loose ends. Additionally, they allow the work of the interviewee to be placed in perspective by summary biographical notes - though biographical details have been alluded to rather than described - or by reference to relevant contextual information.

Composing concise commentaries helped the writer fix the full import of the transcripts more clearly in the mind, and for that reason proved a salutary exercise. In so far as there was any notion of how collectively the data might turn out, the commentaries helped to chart as the investigation unfolded, those issues not merely significant in themselves, but in relation to other issues, before firming up and making an extended interpretation in the light of the information gained.

Here then are transcripted interviews of fourteen acknowledged group teachers. Their philosophies and their ways of teaching groups - much in accord with the essentially practical casts of their minds - provide lessons for those of us receptive enough to learn from them.

4.1
Interviewee : Graham Owen, group clarinet teacher

1. Antecedents

My introduction to teaching groups came about by way of the City Literary Institute, an Adult Education Institute where the entire instrumental programme is organised on a group basis. I was employed there to teach clarinet and initially I had two groups, one beginners the other intermediate though, in actual fact, there was little difference between the two. At first my efforts were a total and utter disaster. I had not grasped any idea of the nature of group activity, I was simply running a series of five minute lessons. In adult education you always know whether or not you are winning by the attendance of your students. I actually lost the entire class by the end of the first year. This led me into pastures new and after a period of some three or four years, I could count on approximately ninety per cent attendance throughout the year. This had nothing or little to do with me; it had a great deal to do with what was going on within the group itself.

2. Rationale

Although teaching groups is didactic to the extent that one is putting over musical and technical ideas, music is being generated from within the group. I do not claim that is a definition of group teaching but it is what happens in reality. It is more dynamic than teaching individual lessons, the material is always changing and you have not the time to be bored. This has tremendous advantages over the snail's pace progress of a series of individual lessons where you could spend the whole day, or even two days, teaching twenty people. Being a fairly impatient type this appeals. I no longer give individual lessons, partly as a matter of principle and partly because I become bored. It is an obsolete way of

working though I am not saying that it is wrong for everyone.

Teaching groups must fulfil many aims. Take my own area, wind teaching, it's a very lonely occupation unless you are careful and it is the same with my pupils. Their only contact with other musicians is, generally speaking, within the group lesson. If you believe, as I do, that the lessons should be a musical experience then the aims must include playing together in ensemble and other aims will accrue from this experience of playing together.

Rhythmic stability is often lacking in those who do not play regularly with other people. In the group situation such problems virtually disappear simply because the individual is swung along with the sense of rhythm, provided you are able to keep a tight rein on the beat. Similarly, intonation problems are largely self-eliminating since the pupil has a model against which he can compare his sound, whereas in the individual lesson, he might well play for years without actually realising he was sharp or flat. So those two technical points, rhythmic stability and intonation, can be helped by group lessons. There are many more examples which could be cited. Moreover, the social aspect is of vital importance if one believes that music is a social activity. Coupled with this is the fact that the group can form into an ensemble; within the first week you have a band!

3. Organisation

The children I am working with at the present time are selected for instrumental lessons by their school teachers. They feel that certain children would benefit from an added dimension to their lives. That does not necessarily mean that I teach the waifs and strays, it means that in the teacher's opinion a child is not being stretched and clarinet lessons

might well stretch them in another area. In one particular case it was felt that a girl from a single parent family needed more direction in her life. Those are the two extremes. The headmaster asked me what sort of child I wanted and those were the criteria I would have used.

I do not believe that there is a package called 'parental support'. Perhaps an example may help: a girl in one of my groups is suffering from what I call parental non-support in that she wanted to discontinue lessons. Informing her parents of this they told her, without question, to tell the teacher and give back the instrument. I would have preferred the parents not to have been involved rather than have that negative attitude. Parents can get in the way; in any case the children I teach cannot rely on parental support so how can I?

The length of lessons varies according to how we feel. If either of us become fed up we pack in. In this respect I am fortunate in that I teach my group during the lunch hours so that children are attending in their own time. I can extend the lessons into the afternoon session with the full support of form teachers who know where the children are, but normally a lesson would be of approximately 45 minutes in length. What I think is much more important is the frequency of the lessons. I see my groups twice a week.

Progress is recorded by evaluating the material rather than the children. This means that if I know that certain children are having problems with a particular technical point I will design the next bit of material to deal with that problem rather than making a note, 'John has trouble getting bottom A'. In other words, it is an ongoing, dynamic process in that I do not know what is going to happen next. Monitoring in this way is hard especially with large numbers, you have to keep your

eyes and ears really open. In this sense it is pie in the sky to expect all instrumental teachers to teach groups until we get a different breed of teacher and one who is thinking along very different lines. Involving all the pupils all the time demands a degree of musicianship on the part of the teacher which I believe is often lacking.

4. Constitution of the group

I'm told that psychologists/sociologists view eight as the optimum number for a group lesson. I teach children in groups of eight though I have worked with up to twenty adults in a group. Age and standard need not affect the size of the group as long as the approach and material are right. The children I teach are all the same age, eleven, but adults range from twenty-year-olds to octogenarians and this causes no problems.

I think you have to be careful not to be too idealogical. Group teaching has to be a flexible arrangement, not set. If you have a large group you have to ensure that everyone's needs are being looked to. This can be done by dividing them up into smaller groups sometimes so that you can devote a few minutes to a pupil's own particular technical problems. Although I have eight in a group I may not necessarily have eight every time I see them.

At present I'm working with a flautist on a joint flute and clarinet project though it may be possible to involve double reeds at a later stage. Initially, the two instruments will be kept separate for one of the twice weekly lessons; the other lesson will be combined. Hopefully when I gain more experience at flute playing, I will be able to take the combined lesson myself. With the range of notes available to elementary flautists and clarinettists we should produce some extraordinary harmony; nevertheless I'm sure it can be done as long as it is done sensitively.

In the early stages we used tuned and untuned percussion. We play 'Mull of Kintyre' over a drone bass played on a metallophone, or 'London's Burning' and other rounds, using pitched percussion or piano ostinati to make the sound more interesting.

5. Materials

The content of the material is of crucial importance. I believe all teachers must research and write their own material. It's simply not possible to write a tutor book or compile the material beforehand, though a resource file may be useful. The material does not come between two covers called 'A Tune a Day' or 'Learn to Play', it just does not happen like that, it has to be done in a different way. I don't use published tutor books at all though I may borrow ideas from them. I feel I can provide more suitable material, after all I know my groups better than the writers of the books do. It's the job of the teacher to provide material which stretches each member of the group; not to try to keep them to a norm within the group; that I believe to be educationally unsound.

To start with I use a fair amount of unison material as it gives the children in the group confidence. They get pushed along with the great sweep of the thing particularly if the person next to them is playing the same notes. After this we tackle two and three-part material. Children can hold a part on their own by the second week provided that the part is carefully written and constructed. It's exciting to find a new tune that will fit. I use the children's own experience as far as possible. Today they are mad keen to learn the title tune for 'Dallas' and in fact that will indicate where the next notes I have to teach them will be. They will be able to play that within one term of starting and that represents

a great achievement for them in their terms.

From time to time I make audio recordings of work we have covered to date. The recordings play through like a story, from taking the clarinet out of its case to learning the techniques of improvisation. I play an opening phrase which is notated and they add an answering phrase. I use the cassette as a teaching aid.

6. Methodology

I write all the tunes on acetate and use an overhead projector. This means that the group can move around the room without music stands getting in the way. In addition to this each member of the group has a copy of the music which they can take away and return when they have finished with it. In the early stages we depend on rote and memory learning. Before they attempt a new tune the children follow the music and finger the notes whilst I play.

I have to be careful not to push too much material at the children. This year I have purposefully cut down the amount of material given to them so that they play less material more often. Now the number of tunes they play in six weeks is no more than a dozen and that is considerably less than last year. As far as possible I combine the use of original material with tunes that the children already know. Some of the first tunes we play are 'Hot Cross Buns' and 'Merrily We Roll Along', together with tunes that I have made up. We sing the tunes with the words, if there are any, so that when they come to play them they have a mental image of what they are doing, and that makes it much easier.

Recently I have become slightly disenchanted by musical games; they can be seen as an end in themselves. There's something intrinsically different between a game and playing a piece of music and confusion of

the two is such that there are problems which I feel have not yet been identified. I'm sure its possible to obtain a musical result which a game cannot produce.

7. Social interaction

I don't think children are naturally co-operative, I have to push co-operation. I remember one child telling me in no uncertain terms that he was able to tongue properly, which previously he had not been able to do, only after being taught by another member of the group and this had nothing to do with my teaching. At least it meant that there was some measure of co-operation! Peer group interaction is very important but it's not quite as blatant or obvious as that, it's much more subtle.

With a group of eight I can tell who is where, what's going on, who has problems and who hasn't. Each one knows where he or she is in the pecking order, I'm convinced of it. If you ask my group of clarinettists 'who is the best player' they will know. Similarly, if you ask them 'who is the worst player' they will also know, and that person probably knows or suspects that he, or she, is the worst player.

Last year the 'wastage' from my group of eight eleven year olds was nil. Research has shown that I should have lost four or five, so something is not being taken into account. The nature of the activity will tend to hold the group together but only if the individual feels that his/her contribution to the group is important, and that depends on the content and style of the lesson.

Over a period of time a leader will emerge and it is unlikely to be a girl. Large boys take on the leader role and this, I believe, is something to do with the way that groups operate. It's a problem of sexism. Dale Spender and others have indicated that with a group as few

as eight the boys are assertive and noisy whereas the girls are quiet and reserved, and they will tend to get left behind unless we are careful to compensate. I separate the girls from the boys occasionally and teach the girls on their own. This is not necessarily to improve their playing but to boost their morale and to make them more assertive. Occasionally I leave them to themselves or I hive them off to work in smaller groups.

8. Teacher skills

You could liken learning to teach groups to learning to teach in the classroom. The average teacher training course is a combination of theory and practice. You learn about it, the theory; and you go out and do it, the practice. Having said that I learnt to teach by teaching and thinking about it with little or no help from anyone else. I've never seen other groups in operation so I don't know what happens. For my part I have developed a particular style of teaching that I feel confident of, I know it works. Now I can go out and see other groups working and assimilate some of their ideas into my style. I don't use any skills that are different from those used by the classroom teacher and there's the rub. If group teaching becomes prevalent or is thought desirable across the education service, we are going to need a completely different sort of peripatetic teacher, not at all the type we have at present.

9. Development

By definition, if group teaching is based on sound educational principles it has to work beyond the elementary stages, if it is not, then we are wasting our time with the lower levels. Naturally the style will change and become a master-class as well as an ensemble. With a group of grade eight standard clarinettists, some of whom may be learning a Brahms Sonata, the technical problem could well be a pianisimo top 'D',

I may ask 'how many can produce this note?'

The way I teach is very developmental in that I'm looking at what happens next, not that it is page four next because we have just done page three. Page four may be quite inappropriate.

10. Learning outcomes

If I have eight at the end of the year then I've won! It means I have given a sufficiently interesting, stimulating experience for them to want to carry on. I think that's a fair measure of success.

Interim commentary

Initially, the interview given by Graham Owen seemed somewhat self-deprecating and perhaps this is to some extent a real drawback of the interview technique in that in the interests of modesty the interviewee tends to underplay his own role. It was interesting how he took none of the credit for the successes of the group but instead rationalised them down to the integrity of the activity itself. Like many a teacher who has attained later success, he is able to admit openly his early failures. An avowed empiricist, he enters a caveat about being 'too idealogical', concerning himself not with definitions, which he seems to enlarge, but with what occurs in practice. Over the years the groups he has taught have wrought essential changes to the way he teaches today.

Interestingly, he distinguishes between the didactic and the musical, believing his lessons to be a musical experience from which other aims accrue. It is perhaps worth dwelling on this for a moment. The distinction seems to be that a group brings to it a musical ambience from which educative and social factors arise whereas an individual setting is more didactic: the teacher will often wait for problems to

occur in the student's playing, diagnose them and then set about correcting them. Graham Owen takes on board the broad educational implications of group music lessons. He teaches those who might benefit from an 'added dimension to their lives', and another who needed 'more direction in her life'. In short, his lessons are accessible to a broad base of pupils.

He reminds us that the instrumental teacher ploughs a lonely furrow - an issue later taken up by Phyllis Palmer. His own comparative isolation is alluded to, though the influence the City Lit has had in leading him to take his first faltering steps across the group teaching threshold and in the challenge it threw down to formulate an approach to teaching groups, cannot be gainsaid.

Far from being jaded his attitude is still fresh and his teaching would appear to be at an innovative stage of development, so much so that he has recently undertaken a study into teaching groups. His joint flute and clarinet project would seem innovatory, especially so if double reeds are included. Whilst he indicates rightly that the range of notes open to such classes is severely limited, there are ways and means - some of which are explored later in the scenarios.

By and large the material he uses is not in the form of published tutor books, rather a resource file developed - like Robert Spencer's 'giveaway' separate sheets of music (cf. interview 4.9) - to be used in the context of a group lesson and used one piece at a time in a sequence determined largely by the requirements of the players. The pieces do not follow a recipe or grand design,they are written to solve particular problems with parts appropriate to each player's needs. First pieces are largely unison with occasional divisi notes a third apart. At this

stage where the parts are in harmony they are nearly always rhythmically parallel.

To conclude,the comments regarding learning outcomes, brief though they are, stress continuance. One wonders if this is due in some measure to the recreative,adult education experience of the interviewee.

4.2
Interviewee : Yvonne Enoch, group piano teacher

1. Antecedents

My interest in group teaching came about as a result of the Kent Music School. I had applied for the position of Area Director and at my interview I was asked whether I would be prepared to work out a method of teaching the piano in groups, really from an economical point of view. Gertrude Collins had a scheme whereby she would take up to eighteen children at a time in her string classes, the cost per child being very little. The idea was to do something similar for piano but limited to six children in any one group. Initially, I did not like the idea. Like many teachers I had not read anything about group teaching nor had I seen it in action, I simply condemned it outright. Nevertheless, I wanted the job and I liked the people interviewing me, one was Mervyn Bruxner, Kent County Music Adviser, and another Muriel Anthony, Principal of the KMS, so to my horror I found myself saying 'yes', and that's how it started.

I was thrown into a secondary school in the middle of the first term without an idea in my head, but I was lucky in the sense that I had one or two advantages other beginner teachers don't have: I could stop the lessons if I found that what I was doing wasn't successful and hand the children over to another teacher with no harm done; secondly, I could not suffer through the loss of pupils. Imagine a private teacher doing that, he wouldn't have any pupils left! The teaching I had done in the past had always been with fourteen-year-olds and above, yet I wanted to try primary school children. As I'd had little to do with that age range I was somewhat frightened until I saw all those lit-up faces agog to find something new. They had minds like blotting paper waiting to absorb everything I gave them. It was then that I realised the possibilities of

group teaching and over the next six or seven years I began to develop my approach. The idea was that it shouldn't be related to any particular book so that teachers were able to use the music of their own choice and adapt my method to their own style of teaching. I wrote Let's Make Music (Hinrichsen-Peters 1969) only because when I started I hadn't the material I wanted. In this I chose specific notes to start with (D in the treble and G and A in the bass) from a purely practical point of view. I've asked many composers to do the same, so that teachers wouldn't always have to use my music, but I have never yet succeeded in getting anyone to do this. My book Group Piano Teaching (CUP 1974) was written to help other teachers who were considering group teaching.

2. Rationale

By teaching in groups you can do so much more than you could teaching individual lessons. For most children, the group lesson is better than the private one, even the very talented could afford to have group lessons backed up by individual lessons. When you teach groups the whole emphasis is based on making children listen and learn by discovering things for themselves. You can't do this in the same way when you teach individually; the temptation is to tell the child and to pick up the lesson as you go along. In the group situation you have to prepare the lesson beforehand and that puts a completely different picture on it; also you can teach an enormous amount of musicianship and this to my mind is the greatest value because the child will probably never become a professional musician, but may want to play at parties, or accompany local singers and be active in the musical life of the community. Musicianship is more easily acquired through a group because children learn from one another. Take chord recognition where a child has to change one note purely on the dictates

of his ear; in an individual lesson there's no excitement because the teacher knows all the answers whereas in a group the other children discover the answer almost as if they were the first ever to discover it.

3. Organisation

As I have said, my greatest concern is for children who will never become professionals; they are the majority. I've met many teachers who abandon less able students and select only the best. To me that is the worst possible kind of teacher but they are the ones whose pupils win the music festivals and they get all the kudos. I'm not envious of that, but they seem to have the wrong attitude. I gather about me many children no one else will teach. I don't use any form of selection but I won't teach children who will not work, or who have been pushed into it by their parents against their own inclinations. Why should every child be a good pianist? If a child can do better playing football than playing the piano why shouldn't he play football? I would never say that a child who had no talent must stop learning because talent isn't everything. You can get an enormous amount of enjoyment from words without really understanding them. So why can't you from music? A pupil of mine considered utterly unmusical by some, has recently given a recital at the Purcell room. If I'd have said to her she had no talent and that she should give up playing the piano, she would never have had the satisfaction of getting as far as she did.

4. Constitution of the group

I start at least two groups at the same time with no more than six children in each and I'll often reduce that number so that I end up with three groups of four. I don't like groups of three; they're too small. With adults I usually start with four; it's a comfortable number and they

don't feel embarrassed after the initial shock of finding out that they have to play to each other! Children aged six and seven go well together, so do eight and nine-year-olds but there's a mental gap between seven and eight-year-olds. There's no point in making the age range too wide because the level of understanding has to be the same. As a rule, however, I am not keen on starting children under eight years of age.

If I have a child who learns an instrument other than the piano then I will ask him to bring his instrument to the group lesson occasionally in order to give experience of accompanying an instrument other than the voice. One of the Polish books I use, A Rhythmitised World by Janina Garscia (PWM 1974), has easy pieces for percussion instruments which are arranged on the piano and on the lap so that one child plays all the instruments; it's marvellous for co-ordination.

5. Materials

I don't like always using the same material. Some of the Polish books, in particular I Begin to Play by Feliks Rybicki (PWM 1946), are imaginative and attractive to children as are the piano pieces of the Russian, Kabalevsky. I never use anything just for it's attractiveness; it has to appeal but to have something constructive to teach as well. I remember meeting one piano teacher, he taught some forty pupils individually, who when I asked what books he used replied 'the Diller-Quaile'. Probing further I enquired what other books he used, he answered 'oh I don't use anything else'. Apparently he had twenty-eight beginners and when I ventured, 'don't you get tired of Diller Quaile?' he replied, 'everytime I use it, it becomes an inspiration.' I find this stultifying and yet so many teachers have this blinkered mind. There's masses of exciting material that they never touch.

6. Methodology

I am involved in the ILEA Tower Hamlets scheme in which music is being brought to children who have little cultural opportunity. Understandably the children do not have their own pianos and whilst I have always said firmly that you can't teach piano unless a child has a piano at home on which to practise, I now find one should not be dogmatic about this. Like the teacher I mentioned before, I had a closed mind. Although my work at Tower Hamlets is challenging, I'm finding it the most exciting and rewarding form of teaching I have ever done. With these children musical games are used for the last five minutes of each lesson. Initially, concentration is limited and games are useful; as children progress I find this need diminishes; games are useful at the beginning and at musical parties but I want to fill the lessons with sound.

Improvisation is only a part of what I do; it has to be approached carefully. If I ask the question 'what would you like to drink, they'd say 'tea', full stop! I'm apt to get the same response on the piano, one is inculcating a tonic finish, you are closing the sentence. Better, I feel, to give them an unrelated bass line with no tonal construction, or key sense, and let the children make up whatever they like. At first their inhibitions are substantial until they begin to feel that they can control their fingers. I tell them to be outrageous and I try to follow them in the bass often changing key the whole time. Recently I gave a demonstration with other teachers' children three of which joined me in an ad hoc improvisation, I played the bass part and children joined in one by one. Personally I have never been able to improvise. Like thousands of students, at college I was not taught keyboard harmony, never taught nor allowed to improvise as a child, so I learn with the children. Sometimes

I ask the group to make up their own bass part, often an ostinato and then improvise two hands together.

7. Social interaction

One child helps another or perhaps eggs him on, there's an awful lot of competition. Though the competitive element is substantial it must be constructive not destructive and that depends to a large extent on the teacher. They begin to help one another from the very first lesson. Before playing I'll ask the group 'Is he going to be right?' Occasionally another child will grasp the hands of the one seated and move them onto the correct keys. I encourage this helpful attitude until a point comes when the child who isn't so quick is helped so much that he no longer thinks for himself; they can be too helpful.

Criticism is terribly important: it makes you alert; it makes you listen to what you are doing and that is the hardest thing to teach. There are lots of mediocre concert pianists going around the world who never listen to themselves, if you record them they say 'oh, is that me?'

The group is made up of individuals, each person is as important as another and if you think of them only as a group you're finished! Having said that, the group becomes an entity on its own. It's very interesting to watch how it grows and develops.

8. Teacher skills

Certain members of the group will always want to play first and this is where the preparation of the lesson becomes important. I prepare so thoroughly that I know not only every piece and scale to be played but in what order they are to be played and by whom, otherwise the child who wants to play first will prevent the others from reading the music for themselves and you'll never know whether they could play the piece

without listening to someone else. Even so, you must be flexible in what you do when the necessity arises. After the first year I find that the child who plays first gets the biggest slice of the cake whilst the child who plays last has the smallest, so it is important to rotate them from the start.

Ideally the best way of learning to teach groups is to go on a course and see other people doing it. I had a Churchill Fellowship which enabled me to travel to the United States and Canada for three months. During my visit I saw very little that I liked though I learnt a great deal. It helped to consolidate my own views and to see where other people were going wrong. It's always so much easier to see other peoples' mistakes than your own. Whenever you hear of a group teacher anywhere go and see what they are doing. It's difficult to judge on one session as you get a lopsided impression of what is going on, so if you can try to see them over several weeks until you have an overall picture of what they are doing.

Teaching groups requires the patience not to give answers away but rather to wait for the answers to come from the children. Whilst it is easy to think that you're helping a child by telling him, your sense of urgency pushing you on, you have to be prepared to wait; it's a very patient game. What you are told drops through the ears from one to the other without ever meeting your brain: what you have to do for yourself you remember. Also, discovering knowledge brings its own pleasure and excitement and that you should never take away from a child. I will sometimes re-phrase a question seven or eight times. This keeps you on your mettle, you have to have that sort of mind, a teasing mind which you can acquire, that can think from every angle until you get the answer you

want. A person who has taught as a class music teacher will cotton on to the idea of group teaching much more quickly than someone who has never taught more than one person at a time.

9. Development

For the first year progress is very slow in comparison with the individual lesson but the amount the children are learning is enormous. By the end of the second year they are roughly level with individually taught children; and by the end of the third year they are nearly always ahead, simply because they have so much more knowledge.

You have to do enough work on a piece to get it going, that way the others will learn from the work. If you don't do enough work on it then no one will learn.

10. Learning outcomes

The group situation can widen the range of skills taught but it depends enormously on the teacher; you have to phrase questions so that instead of saying 'what is wrong with that', you ask 'what was good about it?' This promotes constructive criticism, intensive listening and widens the piano lesson into a musicianship lesson. So by giving musicianship lessons you are making musicians, and that does not mean the playing will be less good. I've had children of grade VIII in groups and by the time they reach that standard their weekly double lesson will consist of musicianship for the first lesson and pieces for the second.

I am consultant for the Halifax Music Education Board, Nova Scotia, where group teaching was started in absolute ideal conditions. The children attend a music centre where there is every conceivable thing in the way of gadgetry - both a help and a hindrance! All the accompanying is done by the children who have been taught in groups from the Piano

department. The standard is such that last term they performed Saint-Saëns Le Carnaval des Animaux for two pianos and orchestra.

It would be unfair to say that group lessons develop in individuals good habits of practising any more than individual tuition does. In both cases you have to show them how to practise. It's no use just saying 'go home and practise.' An advantage the group lesson has, in this respect, is motivation; what one child can achieve another will want to do and that will help practising. If they are not all gathered around the piano when I arrive I am disappointed; but that rarely happens.

If you do everything rhythmically and if you don't let anything go by that is not rhythmical, you are bound to develop rhythmically sensitive students. Attending to rhythm comes about naturally in a group situation and that is not always the case in an individual lesson.

Success is terribly simple: the enjoyment of the individual child. I don't think there's anymore to it than that. If a child is enjoying what he does and if he feels a success, however limited, you've achieved something, haven't you?

Interim commentary

We regard each of the interviews with group teachers as something of a coup, but Yvonne Enoch compels a special respect which amounts to the fact that she has in the field of group piano teaching had an unparalleled influence. It comes as something of a surprise then to learn that perhaps the best known group piano teacher in this country today, and incidentally, her reputation is assessed at a higher worth abroad, came to group teaching more by accident than by design. She was, she admits, more than a little chary to try something of which she had no

experience, a parallel attitude is apparent in many of the newly-qualified music teachers of today, and but for the support given by her colleagues at the Kent Music School, it is unlikely that her piano groups would have ever been formed. This was the bedrock from which her career sprang. Her optimistic approach is contagious,at once deeply sincere based on a candid, honest relationship with her students and full of import for music teachers of any instrument. It is not merely a case of a charismatic teacher, which she undoubtedly is, influencing others to exercise some thought to teaching the piano to groups, but what came over in the interview and what can be gleaned from her book and her articles is a well-tried and proven approach. Neither is it a case of her approach to group teaching being stronger on charm than on theory. Many of her principles though expressed in lay terms overlap into psychological learning theory although in essence they are based more on everyday practical sense than on skill learning procedure. Indeed one or two of her principles go against modern educational theory. Though she would not regard herself as an unqualified success the problems she has encountered appear to have been so few in relation to the success that has come out of this way of working. Her teaching strategy was shaped and fashioned largely through trial and error, from a willingness to work beyond what was demanded of her from a contractual standpoint, from sitting in on primary school classes and by observing Gertrude Collins teaching groups of string players.

4.3
Interviewee : Christine Brown, group teacher of piano and violin

1. Antecedents

I became interested in group teaching about ten years ago when I taught piano in a secondary modern school. A few years later I tried it in a local village primary school and even with infants. Teaching the piano to groups of infants was an interesting experience though they did not get far musically; I wanted to see if it were possible. There was a very keen teacher there who was a great help and I had already done some violin group teaching.

It is different from teaching individually and I think that's what is so intriguing. You have to have a different teaching style, more like that of a general class teacher. The way I teach individuals has definitely changed from my experience of group teaching; I think for the better. I find you have to prepare much more, you have to think of new ideas to get things across in a difficult situation and this carries over to your individual teaching. I still teach individuals as well as groups.

2. Rationale

Naturally, it is teaching to more than one person at a time: two would be a group, but there are greater advantages if there are more children, it's more interesting - up to six or eight, so perhaps round about four is ideal, but circumstances dictate the numbers.

I think the aims have to be slightly different from individual teaching in the sense that in individual teaching you very clearly want the child to make maximum musical progress; the parents are paying for the lessons, obviously expecting some result. Now with group teaching in a school situation I don't think that the musical results are necessarily the be-all and end-all of the exercise. The social and educational

aspects sometimes take precedence over the musical.

The social and educational aspects are the advantages of group work. The disadvantages are musical, I feel. On the piano, touch is a problem, if the children are using dummy keyboards, either plastic or cardboard, the feel is wrong. With violin, it's the intonation that is a problem. There are no problems with the physical movements of the bow, but there are difficulties with the finer musical things like intonation and possibly tone production.

3. Organisation

I don't use any form of selection; I teach as many as want to learn. Those who elect to play are given the opportunity. Some people advocate the use of the Bentley Tests, but I'm against this. To say you haven't a good enough ear to play a musical instrument is unfair. You can't do that in any other subject. We don't say that if you are bad at spelling you can't learn English. It's an absolute contradiction of what a school is trying to do. For a private teacher it is a different matter, if you want to get the best pupils in order to obtain the best results then by all means select, but I don't believe you should do this in school.

I don't think parental support is necessary, just as it is not necessary for any other subject in school, but it's certainly advantageous. The teacher should provide the encouragement. A follow-up during the week is the sort of activity an interested parent could take.

The lessons should be at least half an hour as there are physical preparations to be made and even if you are early and get everything set up, complications can arise. I tune the violins before the children arrive. As I've said,in addition to the lesson there is a follow-up on Saturday morning which we call string club. It's on the lines of

Sheila Nelson's work and it's a time when the groups come together. I keep a notebook and I've still got the notebook I used ten years ago! This is essential because you have to do your thinking before the lesson. You must consider the problems of the previous week, decide how to overcome those problems and which steps to take next. I still write out most of the material we play on large charts as it is easier if all the children are facing the same way. You can then point to the charts, get in amongst the children to adjust the bowing etc. without music stands getting in the way.

It is possible to involve all the pupils at all times, but only to the same extent that one would in a general class lesson. You can't prevent some of them from day dreaming. The lesson must be designed so that they are all involved even if it is only watching and listening to someone else playing. Sometimes only two will play whilst the others observe and vice-versa, and I hope that they will spot faults as well as assimilate the good points.

To cater for the varying standards within one group, I prepare the material so that the child who is proceeding more slowly has a simpler part, whether it is the rhythm that is easier or that the physical difficulties are reduced, while the others will be tackling a more elaborate part. It has to be done by writing your own material.

4. Constitution of the group

The size of the group depends on the teaching room. I cannot cope with more than four violinists in the space available, but I've taken up to six piano pupils at a time. Eight, I feel, is the maximum for most instruments, but if violinists are cramped, can't bow properly and you can't get round them, it's no good. With infants you certainly could not

manage eight because they demand your attention for every little thing they do. My string groups are all from the same year ie., eleven-year-olds who have just come into the school.

5. Materials

I use Eta Cohen's book with my violinists, my own book First Album (Freeman/EMI 1962) and Bartok's Mikrokosmos with my piano groups.

I've made audio recordings of the children playing in the piano classes; we didn't have video in those days. I have some slides which have proved useful as an introduction to group teaching with the college students taking piano diplomas.

6. Methodology

Rote learning is very important in group teaching though I haven't used it in my individual teaching for many years. I decided that there was a problem when you use it in the early stages. The children could play much more attractive things by rote than by reading and that seemed to slow up the reading, so I cut it out of my private teaching. When I began teaching groups I used rote learning and very gradually I brought it back into my individual teaching. This is one of the influences group teaching has had. If you use rote learning carefully, if you have it as a kind of treat and not as a substitute for notation, then I think it has a very important place. Memory playing in a group seems to come more easily, possibly because of the vast amount of repetition which occurs in a group situation. The children are less afraid as they memorise together. Certainly technique is better taught by rote, as then the concentration is on the technical matter rather than on reading an exercise. All my pupils sight-sing the pieces before they play them. With the piano we clap the rhythms and I've found them naturally singing

the notes of pieces. Sight-singing is a great help, they really know what the pieces sound like before they play them.

I make up my own time names, made up according to what the children know. If the names of the children in the class are suitable then we'll use those or place names near where they live, using their own pronunciation and rhythm. You can't impose this, it goes all wrong if you try to impose it. At the school where I teach now I am using the names of the houses of the school for crotchets and quavers and so on, it works very well. You have to remember where you are and which time names you have used with each group, hence the notebook! Musical games are very useful as they are a way of getting things over repeatedly, a way of involving all the children and a way of helping those with physical difficulties with the instrument.

7. Social interaction

You have to know what each member of the group is finding difficult. This is why you need a record book. It might be just one small thing that a child can't do but you have to know how to invent things to help that child overcome the problem.

In an individual lesson the competitive element does not come in at all, unless the child is preparing for a competitive festival and even then it's not really the lesson that is competitive. Children have an instinct for competition and you must try to use that to good effect. It can destroy the feeling of the group if you use it all the time so you must help them, not make them feel foolish. The teacher has a tremendous responsibility to get this balance right.

I was very sad at the Secondary Modern School where I was teaching, as one of the children in my piano group gave up as his parents had sold

their piano. The consequences weren't just bad for that child, they were bad for the rest of the group as well. They felt they had lost a lot. There's much more to lose in a group than in solo lessons.

8. Teacher skills

As I have implied, the attributes of a group teacher are similar to those of a general class teacher. You have to have those skills, especially the musical ones. If you are teaching strings you also need the ability to provide an accompaniment. You need to be able to improvise though not necessarily on your instrument, but if the lesson does not go according to plan you have to have the ability to think of something else to do instantly. It's not like having an individual child sitting on a piano stool perfectly well-behaved while you think what to do next because he can't play as you suggested straight away. In the group lesson you have a whole row of children standing there with instruments and you have to think very quickly. Because of this I think some instrumental teachers would find group teaching difficult, particularly those who have been teaching individuals for many years. Those teachers always want group-taught children to do what their individually-taught children have done before and that's impossible.

9. Development

When children are beyond the elementary stages the pieces they play are generally much longer, so a half an hour lesson is not sufficient time to give everyone a chance to play. At this stage the lessons ought to be extended.

I think children can hold a part on their own from the second lesson. There's much more sense of achievement in holding a part against other children than holding it against the teacher.

10. Learning outcomes

Undoubtedly musicianship develops more naturally in group teaching, whereas you have to cater for it in individual lessons. Aural awareness is much stronger because they are listening to other people as well as to themselves and rhythmic awareness, that catching of rhythm, is more likely to occur. For instance, as part of a crowd on a football terrace clapping a rhythm, you become caught up in the sense of momentum engendered. In an individual lesson you can't provide that 'crowd' feeling of rhythm whereas in a group it is there naturally. Because group-taught children have had more experience in keeping a part, and not having your exclusive attention, they readily take part in ensemble activities, either duets, trios or chamber music, though all my individual pupils play in ensembles regularly as well. My groups at school tend not to practise as much as I would like. I hope in the future that more time will be found for them to practise at school.

If they go out of the room happy and they want to come again next week, then that's success! The moment they go out of the room you know that it's been a success. You don't get that in an individual lesson.

Interim commentary

Formerly a senior lecturer in music at Bretton Hall College of Education, Christine Brown now teaches groups of violinists at Harrogate College. A many-sided person, diversity is her most salient characteristic. In addition to her academic qualifications in music, she has a law degree and a diploma in philosophy. She has published four piano albums (EMI) and is currently writing a tome on Bartok. Despite such polymathy, she would demur at describing herself as being in the

vanguard of group teachers, but it is perhaps not unexpected that someone with so many diverse interests, together with a thorough grounding in music education, should have formulated firm opinions on teaching groups and expressed those opinions in print. What then are the salient points of the interview? Briefly, they are threefold: firstly the acceptance that social and educational aspects can sometimes take precedence over the musical . Allied to this is her open attitude to whom she will teach. Secondly, the recognition that 'musicianship develops more naturally in group teaching,' whereas it has to be catered for in individual lessons. Thirdly, a logical corollary to the second, the supposition that as group-taught students have the experience of playing with others and do not have the teacher's exclusive attention, they are adept at independent part playing.

It is with the second of these points that earlier in the transcript there appears a somewhat contradictory statement. This concerns the advantages and disadvantages she cites of group teaching: 'The disadvantages are musical.' She goes on to say that on the piano, touch can be a problem especially if students use dummy keyboards; with the violin, intonation. There are other views which conflict with this, of course. The argument resembles in part that relating group instruction with the problems of embouchure formation put about by some wind and brass players. Whilst on the piano, touch is a precondition of expressive playing and it may be possible to detect in those used to dummy keyboards a certain casualness with regard to dynamic markings, for most group piano teachers such visual aids are extrinsic to the essentials of the lessons, by and large their use of them is infrequent. At some time during the lesson each student will have a chance to play when tactile sense can

be reinforced, supposing that it cannot be reinforced in the student's own practice session. But expressive playing is cerebral as well as tactual. In a group, students can be made aware of expressive qualities by listening to the playing of others. That must be a feature which weighs heavily. Before leaving the issue there is one further point. Nowadays with the imposing and often bewildering array of electronic instruments that exists, all manner of organs, synthesizers and electronic pianos, each with a distinct feel and requiring a slightly modified playing technique, it is easy to be confused by the geography and action of different keyboards. Tomorrow's players are more likely to require all-round keyboard facility, be able to change swiftly from one instrument to another. If visual aids help them in preparing for those skills then their use would seem to be justified.

String groups, according to Christine Brown, have a problem of a different order. Poor intonation can be very real especially if there is too much extraneous noise and not enough attentive listening, but at least in a group where students are playing like-instruments, they can follow the examples of others and are exposed to some notional, standard pitch. Empirically, it is often the case that string players who come together only in a school orchestra or a mixed ensemble rehearsal, find tuning especially troublesome whereas in a homogeneous, sectional group, tuning is relatively straightforward and usually markedly improved.

4.4
Interviewee : Kenneth van Barthold, concert pianist and group piano teacher

1. Antecedents

Although group teaching is the norm on the Continent curiously enough it is almost non-existent in this country. I was trained entirely in Paris. I didn't go to music college or any kind of musical institution in this country; therefore the whole of my training was on a staple Conservatory basis. That is not to extol Paris: the Conservatoire is in the doldrums and the French are very conscious of this. But one has to recall that the Paris Conservatoire was the prototype. The Dutch, Belgian, Spanish and Italian conservatory systems were all modelled on the French one. It was started immediately after the French Revolution so it is very old (1791). When they started the Eastern European conservatoires, the St. Petersburg and the Moscow, they were quite specifically planned on the French model and then Warsaw copied the Russian model and so forth. There is a 'grandfather' sense in Paris because they started the idea.

The conservatoire began as the poor man's state provision of music teaching in a moment of high idealism at the time of the Revolution. I think that the class idea was a mixture of, and a hangover from, the Renaissance 'atelier' idea, that if you put a maître (we still used to call the professors that) in charge of a group, then almost by osmosis the group would acquire not only the actual mechanics of the skill but its whole ethos. This was in the 1790's! It was not enmeshed, as a lot of modern group teaching is in this country, with the psychology of the student-to-teacher relationship and group psychology: it was simply a straight 'atelier' idea. Although I was a student in the late nineteen

forties and early nineteen fifties, the 'atelier' idea was still there. You definitely belonged to 'l'écurie' (the stable), of Monsieur X, Y or Z and there was a complete area of commonly accepted repertoire. This 'atelier' system was so strong that in a curious way the actual external mechanics of the running of the groups were virtually non-existent. It was incredibly free and yet the pressure, because of the fact that certain things were just expected, was almost unbearable.

The class comprising twelve students, met for three hours on four days of the week and you were allocated a day; within that framework, however, everything was flexible. Sometimes you might attend several days, or play for two hours one week and only ten minutes the next. It was accepted that the programme of work was thus with this Professor or thus with another Professor, but none of this was written down, so there was no stated curriculum. The course had evolved in the 'atelier' tradition within each "school" and the pressure to conform was enormous. The approach was authoritarian and rigid, but you learned, though the amount of actual instruction was curiously little. Even today the French teaching philosophy remains rigid but in the 'forties and 'fifties it was pre-Daniel Cohn-Bendit, so it was still very much a case that at five-minutes to three schoolchildren all over the country would be doing maths. This mentality seeped right through. You were told, how to practise, or how to sight-read: there was a correct way of doing everything and that was that. You were given a huge quantity of work to do. The idea was that by sheer quantity, by living in this atmosphere, the cream would percolate to the top and that you would be constantly influenced by it. The skimmed milk at the bottom just fell out, the system was so severe.

There were no examinations or anything of that kind but a public

competition was held at the end of each year and if you didn't win something in open competition two years running you were out automatically. The system was utterly ruthless: they argued that you were being prepared for a profession in which one out of a thousand succeeds. They were not trying to train teachers. The ethos was very different. They were not concerned with encouraging people, the question of the students' mentality was non-existent. They were interested in competence, in skill, in being quick, and in professionalism in the sense that you settled down to things and you dealt with them methodically. If you gained illumination in the process then that was a bonus, and they were not in the bonus market. This I feel is important because I can vouch for the fact that this ruthlessness and suction to the top is absolutely standard on the Continent. Since it is unknown in this country it is one side of group teaching that people do not see. The idea of any type of conformism is antipathetic to the British. We like to think that a class of thirty comprises thirty individuals and we lean over as much to the wrong side of fragmentation and encouragement of the individual, as the Continentals lean over to the side of conformity: the truth is somewhere in between. Learning a C major scale is something you just have to learn to do. All these theories that there is no point in learning a major scale until you are moved by the spirit, or because it is an artistic experience are nonsense. Similarly, the French idea, that you should never be allowed to be expressive until you can play all twenty-four scales, is equally absurd. But these attitudes influence the mentality towards group teaching. If it is based on the idea of providing an illuminative experience, it is going to be totally different from group teaching which is trying to produce certain capabilities as quickly as possible. The

Continental system looks for that - we don't. We don't quite know what we are doing.

2. Rationale

What I actually do when teaching is adventitious: I do what I do because I happen to be teaching a particular person. A class starts by being an event to which the students contribute in a way that does not happen in a private lesson. In a private lesson the contribution is often made by the teacher and the student is a recipient. In a class, certainly the kind that I like to organise, the idea is that students come together because there is something that they can pay into the kitty. I think this is very important. By the same token what they take away is not always given to them. The point of the private lesson is instruction. In a class something will happen which one of the group notices; he will then go away and do something about it. The kind of group tuition where one is reduced to saying 'what you have to do exactly is this' is less successful than a situation in which something happens, which unconsciously is noticed, retained and something different done as a result. That virtually cannot happen in the private lesson and therefore the whole type of instruction is different and the type of teacher has to be different. Obviously, he has to disseminate information, stimulate and correct etc., but he is there basically to engineer situations which are going to produce an atmosphere so strong that it will be retained. If he is successful it will be retained years and years after in a way that a private lesson can never do. That in a nutshell is the whole strength of the activity: it can be shattering. I still have vivid memories of the classes I attended in Paris thirty years ago. Incidentally there were no private lessons at the Conservatoire at all. Whether you did harmony, counterpoint, flute,

trumpet, piano or ear training, even conducting, it was all done in groups. Everything I ever learnt in the Conservatoire from rudiments and solfège upwards, was done in groups. I still have vivid memories of specific moments when suddenly there was a "frisson," a kind of electricity in the whole class.

3. Organisation

Even though I've been running piano classes for twenty years I am still always of two minds on the question of selection. In practice, if someone comes to join a class of mine first they talk to me so that if they are way in the wrong league they're not put through an ordeal which is irrelevant and could be very damaging indeed. But if they are approximately in the right league they have the run of the place. In addition to this some ask to bring friends and my answer is always 'yes'. The more people in the class the better and although some of them will not play I'll try to draw them into the discussion. That is how the selection procedure works. By sitting in and trying out. Usually I have more trouble from people who are of adequate standard but who daren't try, than the other way round. Maybe that is a reflection on me! I think what happens is that classes are fairly strong social units and it takes a while for a newcomer to gain entry. Those ahead of them don't mean to be exclusive - most of them are very welcoming people - and within a very short time they have the newcomers round to their houses. But in the initial encounter it is very easy to feel that you are outside, that this is an élite which talks a language that is almost tangential and that it all moves at a considerable pace. I don't want to destroy that because it is essential to the working of the group.

The middle of the road classes are the most taxing: beginners are still

malleable but if you get the hardened amateur who has been playing the piano for thirty-five years, you have a tough proposition. I like to make an amateur class ever so slightly frightening (I used to have the piano they played on a platform so they had to climb up there each week) because this is the strongest hold you have over people to make an effort. It's regrettable but if human beings are liable to be put under some kind of spotlight they will find resources that they will not find at other times. Whilst one has to play this extremely judiciously because adults will tend to vote with their feet, if you make the business of having to play a bit of an ordeal they are more likely to go home and actually do something about practising for it, if only for the worst of motives!

The length of the lesson depends on the quantity of material that can be contributed by any individual student. If I were running a group workshop for people currently in the business of preparing recitals, so that they needed to air pieces already in their repertory and deal with the business of learning new works, I would need an allocation of more than an hour per head. On the other hand in dealing with amateurs of very limited needs, I could probably cope with a dozen in a 2 hour class since they haven't the practising time to produce more material.

I believe very strongly that the basis of group work is that work has to be prepared outside the group first. When somebody has either created something or learnt something, they then bring it into the group. It is not that the thing actually happens in the group. This is probably where it is different from something like a brass band. It's like a seminary, the group creates a framework that people take from, digest, and pay back.

4. Constitution of the group

The purpose of a group obviously governs its constitution; you cannot

just blanket the whole idea of group teaching in one. The difference, for instance, between a Suzuki based group - where the idea is that the activity is totally unified, thirty children all playing the same tune applying exactly the same bowing - is obviously in essence different from trying to teach counterpoint at a reasonable level of sophistication to people who already have an ear, and some individuality and who are coming together to work in a group. The nature of the two groups is quite different so I think in approaching a philosophy of group teaching it is extremely important to make the distinction in one's own mind as to what are the actual objectives of the teacher and of the students in coming into the group. This distinction is not always made. There is also a great deal of confusion between the idea of group teaching for reasons of economy, (getting six children together to play guitar) and the group of four advanced pianists coming together to learn Scriabin Sonatas. Since the objectives are different, so the mechanics are different, the manipulation of the group is different, and the teaching technique has to be different. Where the teaching technique is on a massed basis it can be far more authoritarian than for a small group working at a sophisticated level. In the latter you are establishing a seminar type of atmosphere where people are contributing their own pennies into the pool and what one is looking for is a kind of 'cross-learning'. You don't want cross-learning with a group of eight-year-olds who can't tune the guitar properly.

5. Materials

At the City Lit, as class time is severely limited, (two hours for not less than thirteen pupils) one needs to find ways of dealing with matters in common. I began to look at the various factors over which I had

control in a class and found they were precious few. But one thing I could control was the material used so I began experimenting and limiting the area of material that was covered in a particular group. You can't be indefinitely severe and must sometimes let people play what they want, but it is intriguing that over the years the most memorable groups that I have taught have been those in which the material was severely limited. For instance, with a class of a dozen pianists, I have spent a term on the Two-part inventions of Bach. Not even any other Bach - just two-part inventions. There are enough for each person to do a different one. The more limited the material being studied the more the inner power of the group builds up and, strangely enough, the more individual people become. The inventions act as a kind of pillar in the middle and they are reflected as in a mirror by the different ways people handle them. One can work in this way at all levels. It is the principle that matters.

We use the same technique with beginners playing from the first book of Mikrokosmos. These intriguing pieces, beautifully wrought by Bartok, make slightly unusual sounds and are written in such a way as to make explanations of musical theory unnecessary at this stage. There are six pieces at the beginning : we leave the fifteen or so beginners to range freely amongst these six and it takes them some weeks to sort them out. As tutor you can take out the rhythm, pitch or co-ordinational aspects and capitalise on these. What emerges is a tightness that comes around the central theme because the material is unified. I thought at one time that provided one was using a book - perhaps A hundred best classics with one person playing Dussek, another playing Bertini and yet another playing Diabelli - that the group approach would work, but it is not the same. There has to be a central theme and musical style then the interrelation

of the personalities works. We use this approach throughout the department. With a central theme the group is much more likely to take off. This doesn't mean that two people should work on the very same piece simultaneously as there develops a kind of personal, love relationship with a piece of music on which you are struggling and I think you should be allowed to have that relationship, and possess your piece temporarily for yourself.

6. Methodology

I never quite know to what extent one should present material in a beautifully logical order, though periodically stepping out of that order, or work more at hand on things thrown up by the group. There are no hard and fast rules. If with a musical appreciation class you start at Pope Gregory VI and proceed to grind remorselessly through the history of western music you won't have a student left after six months. If on the other hand you dabble and flit from one end of the spectrum to another without any kind of web you are still going to lose them. This is something one is always having doubts about, the extent to which a course is structured. Obviously if the course takes off in a given direction you must allow it to take off but if it veers too far then there is a danger. In particular I think there is a serious problem with a lot of modern project learning, with curriculum that is as flexible as that. Ultimately students need a rationale. Whether it is a historic rationale in the sense of unfolding a series of events or whether it is a rationale that man has imposed on the subject, at some stage there is a need to become aware of it. I didn't always believe that, I used to think that one should only learn something as it becomes necessary. Now although I feel that discovery learning is desperately important, life is not as simple as

that!

7. Social interaction

Competition needs to be carefully handled. It's terribly unfashionable to talk of competitiveness but the competitive element need not be destructive. Take my group of postgraduate students for example, they were floundering trying to learn the Rachmaninov Preludes until one girl came back, having worked very hard, gave a decent rendering and suddenly the spell was broken and the ethos opened.

Co-operation should emerge largely from a feeling of everyone being in the mire. That is the strongest unifying force there is and in that sense it is important that a tutor should join his students in the mire. Periodically I quite deliberately give examples of things that have proved difficult for former students and I show them where it was I too had difficulty. Once they feel problems in common, co-operation comes very easily even to the extent of them spending their spare time together to correct playing faults, misreadings and rhythm. I haven't found that people sponge off each other and certainly not in terms of interdependence. The problem which occurs in all stages of amateurs and professionals, is a feeling of uncertainty that what they have learnt on their instrument is good enough to play in front of other people. I wouldn't know to what extent my pupils are bolstered by the fact of having played to someone else.

8. Teacher Skills

I have an abhorence of the idea that teaching is an art in itself. That the art is the same whether teaching badminton, motor car maintenance, stained glass windows or piano playing. Firstly a group teacher has to be good at what it is he is teaching. Most of the staff here at the City Lit

are professional executants of high repute. We don't need the principal oboe of the Royal Opera House to teach the six amateur oboists here but the higher the stature of the man and his skill, the more relaxed the ethos that he emanates. I would put that as a very high priority. In the teeth of modern thinking I am inclined to take a person whom I know is totally at ease in his skill and not perhaps a particularly good communicator rather than the other way round. It might be different if working with children: adults however will make allowances for a tutor. There also has to be an exhibitionist streak in the teacher, for there is an element of entertainment necessary in running a group which does not apply in a private lesson. He must have the capacity to ad lib. He must also have a particular knack for knowing how to capitalise on situations and many good private teachers don't have this. There are some teachers who in a private lesson have infinite patience to go on until they see something sink into an individual but you can't do that with a group. You can't go on hammering at them until collectively something has sunk in. You have to be capable of dealing with things as they are thrown at you. All this requires a special kind of person and if they aren't that kind of person it's better that they carry on playing and don't teach, since all the teacher training on earth will not change them.

9. Development

As a nation we are still suspicious of skill. We like to think that technique is secondary. In instrumental playing this is not the case and you cannot use a scale expressively until you know where the notes are. You have to learn certain things and in this process, like the old religious paradox of losing yourself to find yourself, you have to submit totally to the disciplines that are inherent in the skill; only then do

you acquire some kind of freedom, independence and individuality. The very degree to which you resist total submission to the requirements of the skill and insist that you are different from everyone else, is the extent to which you will not gain your freedom as an artist. This therefore must be mirrored in the teaching and this is the cardinal difference between the major instrumental teaching on the Continent and teaching in this country. We are bogged down in the whole educational field because of our insistence on liberality and individuality. Much of the damage is done before reaching the music colleges by going through our system of graded examinations whereby one can go straight up without acquiring any lateral width in the skill. One cannot acquire the actual mechanics of a skill by learning only three pieces at each level.

If as a teacher you divorce the philosophy of how you are going to implant your knowledge and skill into someone from your own experience of that knowledge and skill, then you are in trouble. My own teaching of the piano is intimately woven and has been throughout my career with my own playing skill. This is paramount and vital to me as a human being. It is out of my playing skill that the whole mishmash of the way I handle my students has developed. Students have had a tremendous influence on me. How you change the training of teachers is a huge subject and I would not pretend to know. It is partially a lost cause as there is still in the Anglo-Saxon temperament a terrible suspicion of someone who is extremely good at something. They love the amateur here. Many of our teachers are amateurs of the skills they teach.

10. Learning outcomes

I don't think that standard is created by logical training. If you take children who are gifted and submit them to a rigorous regime they

will not automatically become good pianists. What has to happen is that you should create an ethos in which there is very good piano playing around, then; by exposing talented children to it they will become good. This is what happens in brass bands and very often they themselves will not understand the process by which they become good players. Ashkenazy once said to me that he didn't remember anyone at the Conservatoire talking about technique yet they all acquired it. That is a very significant remark. In my class in Paris I found, for instance, that all the students knew how to play double thirds. So I asked them how and then went away and just practised. This is what frequently happened in Paris. I don't remember anyone making a fuss about technique. It was only after I had left Paris that I started to read Alfred Cortot, Les Principes nationels de la technique pianistique; James Ching, On teaching piano technique to children (KPM 1962); Jozsef Gat, The technique of piano playing (Collet's 1974), and many more. That was when I started to apply my intellect.

I really do believe that you can teach individual, highly personal skills in groups, moreover I believe that the most efficient as well as the most pleasurable way of teaching a personal skill is to put it into a context of other peoples' highly personal, developed skills. For instance, hearing is intensely personal and that is why it is absolutely essential to do ear training in a composite and as creative an atmosphere as you can. It is the very individuality of the thing that is heightened by the presence of other individuals. In other words you don't know how individual you are until you are faced by two contributing factors: one, the music, say by Bach; and the other, the rest of the group who stand in relation to that music. Bach is immutable but by the differences in

performance you realise what of yours is the same as the others and what is different.

I define good group teaching by a tautology; it is the best way of manipulating a group, depending on what it is you are trying to teach them. Similarly one evaluates success by asking, has the group achieved what it was set up for? Group teaching is a means to an end; if a group system has been established to produce top-rate ballerinas from talented children and it does not produce them, then it is a bad system. I suppose you evaluate group piano lessons by how the students play the piano. Education in this country is very much at an introspective stage. We are trying to evaluate methods of teaching without always remembering that teaching is specific objectives. These have become secondary. People can become so involved in how they are going to do things, in the mentality to it in general, that in the end they may not be very good at what it is they came to do in the first place.

Interim commentary

This interview represents something of a milestone. With such an erudite and articulate man, a rare combination of practising performer-cum-intellectual, there seems little to add to an already protracted transcript - an engaging and intriguing distillation of Kenneth van Barthold's experiences at the Paris Conservatoire. But perhaps we can focus on one or two issues raised in the course of the interview and draw together some of the loose threads - loose due to space and time factors not to any internal flaw in the logic of the argument.

The graphic account of student days spent in the social milieu of the Paris Conservatoire makes fascinating reading not only in providing a

model from the near Continent by which British music colleges can be compared, but for outlining the origins and ethos of the 'atelier' system. It is not, as we shall discuss later, untypical of what is happening now. The impression gained of l'écurie was that it was considered de rigueur not to talk of technique or of the mechanics of playing, nonetheless, almost by osmosis, they were acquired. Like British brass bands they achieve group standards that would not have been thought of by individual players. The authoritarianism and rigidity of the French teaching philosophy is renowned yet what is less apparent is the freedom given to the maîtres of the Conservatoire to shape the space within the rigid framework. Whilst there were no examinations to be worked for, nemesis came in the form of the annual public competition. The ruthlessness of the system, justified on the tenets that students were 'being prepared for a profession in which one out of a thousand succeeds', is hard for us to swallow. For that reason, it is difficult to see that side of it working in this country. There is, however, no logical reason why authoritarianism and ruthlessness should be intrinsically bound up with group teaching, both could apply with equal pertinence to individual teaching.

Though superfluous at this juncture, reference was made to the British amateur tradition and this is more significant than at first appears - as we will show later. For the present, it is worth the reminder that Germany too has a substantial amateur tradition. One further issue was noted which at first appearance seems problematic. This was the reference to making the amateur class a slightly frightening coterie so that the students will make an effort. Clearly, a judicious balance is vital here. We all perform better if we are slightly

anxious, the adrenalin prior to an exam can help an examinee focus his mind, but if we are too anxious we cannot work at all. Group teaching it was intimated required a different mentality, attuned to, and able to engineer social situations; that in turn can stimulate an atmosphere which can be retained in the memory. His reference to human perceptions and the universal forms which they reflect - in the example cited, a piece by Bach - stems back to Plato, the dualist and advocate of the immutable. Kenneth van Barthold's own teaching, he acknowledged, is 'intimately woven' with his playing skill. It is understandable then that he sees that by evaluating methods of teaching, the process is itself likely to take over, becoming in some unadmitted way the subject of the discussion rather than the vehicle of its transmission and furtherance.

As was often the case, some of the more significant remarks were voiced after switching the tape recorder off. In particular, Kenneth van Barthold's use of analogy was at times inspired. In fairness to the interviewee we felt the need to add this grace note to the transcript. On reflecting on the learning network in groups an analogy was drawn: within months of Bannister breaking the record for the four-minute mile, others began to match the performance. Bannister's drive for achievement had overcome the psychological barrier and dispelled the myth.

4.5
Interviewee : Robert Plowright, group teacher of musicianship and composition

1. Antecedents

I was taught by Gladys Puttick, Yorke Trotter's prodigy and I have been teaching groups at the City Lit since 1960. Before that I taught general musicianship, keyboard harmony and improvisation to groups of graduate students at Trinity College of Music. I no longer give individual tuition though strangely enough in my early days at Trinity I gave individual composition lessons. Once I started teaching groups I could see the advantages group lessons had over a one-to-one situation; teaching composition is one of the best ways of realising that eight heads are better than one.

2. Rationale

If the teaching is of the type that merely gives information then I can't see much point in differentiating between group or individual situations but if the teaching is of the type that stimulates a response, getting the students to supply the material with which you teach them, then there are many advantages in teaching groups, namely :

(i) More learning situations arise by the diversity of group response than from a one-to-one situation. What does arise does so in vital, musical, expressive context rather than in an artificially imposed context. For example, I remember one class of nine-year-olds in which one child wrote a piece without any expression marks so I deliberately played her music far too quickly and she became terribly annoyed. Suggestions of 'andante cantabile', 'allegro con fuoco' etc., came from the group and I made the point that I needed some indication of how to play the piece. By the following week everyone's composition had strings of Italian terms,

several of which I had never heard. When I admitted that some of these were new to me there were smug smiles over the faces of the class but what I had done was stimulate the research in a context vital to their expression.

That is what I mean by matters arising in a context. The alternative would have been to say 'there's a list of Italian terms on page 27:go off and learn them.'

(ii) The critical faculty develops naturally in a group. When each of the group is involved in another's work by listening and by commenting, a sense of discrimination develops. Unless the teacher deliberately plays something badly, I cannot see that happening in a one-to-one lesson. Further, by involving the students in the comments and criticisms of others, they can then criticise their own works. As they have heard seven or eight different pieces in addition to their own during the course of one lesson, feelings for period and style begin to develop quickly.

(iii) As familiarity develops, self-consciousness and nervousness disappear. I remember some years ago teaching a student individually and eventually the time came for her to perform in public. She asked whether or not I would be present during the recital and I explained that I had a rehearsal elsewhere, 'oh dear' she remarked, 'what shall I do'. If there is that kind of dependence then something is wrong. In a group it is taken for granted that you play in front of your friends. As the group come to know each other self-consciousness and nervousness dissipate; that is crucial for performance.

(iv) Encouragement is terribly important. If after one of the group has played the others say 'well done' it provides reinforcement. We all

need encouragement. In one of my classes a lady was particularly frightened so I suggested she sit at the back of the class just to listen. Eventually she decided she would play. After an initial good start she began to go wrong and she became panic-stricken. It was then that the rest of the group gathered around her at the piano. They almost pushed her through the music in a good natured, friendly way and from then on she was no longer bothered by nervousness.

3. Organisation

We have a full-time student adviser here in addition to departmental heads so the students are filtered rather than selected. The City Lit. is large enough to have those of like-ability in the same group. With the flautists we have an elementary class which will take beginners and those who have been playing for up to one year; an intermediate class to take those who have been playing for two or three years and perhaps can manage the easier movements of a Handel Sonata; and an advanced class for those of diploma standard and beyond.

Lessons are between one and a half to two hours in length but it depends on the size and level of the group. Elementary students cannot sustain as long a lesson as those who are more advanced but with an average of twelve to fourteen students in each group we need at least an hour and a half, otherwise we would get nothing done.

4. Constitution of the group

We have to work within an economic framework of a ratio 13:1. At the beginner and elementary level I am prepared to take up to twenty in a group, but once they progress to writing, say within a fortnight, a movement of a quartet; then eight would be a maximum. If there are fewer than eight the group does not gell but beyond ten it becomes unwieldy, you can't get through enough. As we have both large and small groups we

can balance the average to meet the statistic required. Indeed because of circumstances people will come even though they know they will not necessarily play on that particular day. If our group teaching is successful they don't have to actually perform in order to learn.

5. Materials

The material is crucial. I do not use tutor books nor do any of my teachers. We can all write music and we do. The material is organised in such a way that the response to it is at the individual's own level. For instance, if I were to write on the blackboard the beginning of a six-eight tune and then ask the class to extend that tune, one person's response may be to modulate though he may know nothing of modulation yet he is able to hear a change of key. Another person may not feel the need to modulate. One of them is further on aurally than the other, but both answers are, of course, equally valid as they are able to incorporate their experience into the response they make. That's what I mean by the material being organised. I have regular meetings with my teachers and we discuss the writing and invention of material which can be responded to at different levels yet at the same time be valuable to the group as a whole. We use tuned percussion as well as their own instruments and we get them to improvise. It is using improvisation as a musical conversation: if they can express ideas however modest then they are beginning to use music as a language - that's the analogy I use.

6. Methodology

Right from the word go the lessons are creative. In the first lesson they improvise vocally: I play an opening phrase after which they sing an answering phrase. That leads on to trying to write down their answering phrase. Eventually they learn about chords so even in the first

year they are writing respectable tunes and finding simple chords to place under those tunes. By the second year they are fairly conversant with classical harmony. At third year level we study romantic harmony so by the end of those three years they not only know about harmony in a variety of idioms but they can, and have been, using it as a language. By that I don't mean that they write music of great originality but what they produce is creative and original to them. Those who during the three-year course become interested in composition for its own sake continue to pursue modern compositional techniques to quite a high level.

7. Social interaction

The social interaction is very valuable. They come to know one another through their idiosyncrasies, musical and otherwise. They begin to gell as a social unit. The group takes on an identity of its own, the individuals become friends and that can act as an incentive to press on when they reach a plateau or want to give up. Indeed with my adult groups the content of the lesson is discussed at length in the local pub after class - such is the social side!

8. Teacher skills

The two things I require here are firstly, that they should be creative though they need not be published composers; and secondly, they must be able to improvise for it is in improvisation that the learning begins. To extend the earlier example of modulation: you can talk of key change ad nauseam but only by playing a simple C major tune and taking it through a variety of related keys does the idea begin to make sense. My own teacher whether he was showing me fugue or laying out the ingredients of impressionism for me to cook up something of my own, would write in my manuscript book a beginning so lovely that I could not wait

to start working on the exercise. That is what I hope we do. We don't always reach that level but we try.

The ability to handle groups comes from experience, I'm not sure that it can be trained. Perhaps it is a case of 'as ye learn so shall ye teach'. At the City Lit I have been very fortunate in that I was able to hand pick the staff, I didn't inherit them! Some of the teachers I taught as students; several of them would attend my monthly post-graduate composition class so they had experienced the excitement of having made something which was successful and which other people in the group liked. At each stage I would say to the postgrads 'now imagine yourself in front of a second year City Lit musicianship class, invent some material to try and do for them what you have been experiencing at your level.' In this way I could almost monitor how they invented material for group use. In addition to this I would ask about their groups and about problems that had arisen. By having those sorts of regular discussion, not within a context of teacher and taught but rather of senior chairman amongst colleagues, one is able to keep a finger on the pulse and the experience that accrues is invaluable. That approach and experience filters down to a more elementary level in their own teaching. If they have had group experience from the student end then they will teach well, if they have never had that experience it is very difficult for them to teach creatively.

9. Development

Sometimes the group will respond in a way that I have never seen before; to that extent my own vocabulary and creative ability go on developing alongside that of the students. If I were the sort of person who having completed my training thought that all that we required was

to pass on my knowledge until retirement then I would rather not teach. What gells out of a creative group teaches me. Part of the craft of my teaching came from creative group situations in which I saw things that had not occured before. When that happens I say to a group 'I'm going to take that idea for my next piece' and usually the reply is 'you're welcome because we've taken plenty of your ideas'. If you teach in this way you have to grant students independence; their own tastes, likes and dislikes; and the freedom to argue; which then makes you go on developing, moreover it makes you pinpoint your objectives. That I find happens in a group but it did not happen when I taught on a one-to-one basis.

10. Learning outcomes

Success must be in terms of the individual. To cite two examples:

(i) In a musicianship class one of the students was having problems to the extent that she did not appear to be grasping even elementary notation. Nevertheless the teacher persisted and she recently drew my attention to a simple setting of a carol done by the same student. The key of A minor had been used very expressively to begin and end the piece with a modulation in the centre to C major. Although the chords might have been better chosen and compared to the rest of the group the piece was still elementary, in terms of the student's own development the progress was remarkable.

(ii) At one stage we were trying to rationalise the work of the City Lit by cutting some of the elementary classes. After discussing this with one of the flute teachers, I listened in on a group of beginner flautists playing Bach's Minuet in G. The teacher pointed out that three months previously these 'players' could neither play a note nor

read music and to her, a professional orchestral flautist, that represented a tremendous achievement. She was evaluating not in terms of the whole group but with what had happened to the individuals within that group. Needless to say, the elementary work was retained.

Interim commentary

There are so many avenues to explore within this interview that it is difficult to know where to begin. The overriding impression of the whole transcript is that the views expressed are both well-considered and sincere. Indeed, Robert Plowright's Northern directness is hard to dislike, yet still more striking is his consistent intelligence of purpose. Despite frequent interruptions during the course of the interview - from apologetic students who one feels knock on his door more for a sympathetic ear than for course guidance - he was able to pick up the threads of his argument without any apparent loss of coherence. This, coupled with his mode of deliverance, was a lesson in itself.

As one might expect, there were similarities with Kenneth van Barthold's viewpoint: both musicians are, after all, working if not together then assuredly side by side. Yet what is refreshing and in some ways surprising is an avoidance of a departmental 'line'. The two musicians are very different: both, however, are extraordinary. As it happened, interviewing one directly after the other, the differences were sharply discernible. Without becoming anecdotal, Robert Plowright makes clear his case by frequent use of apposite examples. He had given not inconsiderable thought to how he was to express himself and he structured the course of the interview to the extent of itemising the precise points he wanted to make. On the other hand, Kenneth van

Barthold,the polymath, was at once more rhapsodic and wide-ranging. Unquestionably, the contributions of both personalities are complementary and equally valid to the workings of the City Lit. Robert Plowright has the advantage of focus: Kenneth van Barthold has the advantage of range.

Returning to Robert Plowright, he uses words and phrases which recent music educationalists have looked on if not pejoratively then charily: 'creativity' and the phrase 'music as a language' cause questionable looks in some quarters. But rather than banding these about as some writers have done in the past without clarification, he restricts their usage and qualifies them by giving precise, clearly-defined meanings. In the context in which he uses them, the words seem not misplaced. Moreover, his very definite ideas do not stop at semantics. He makes no bones about having hand picked his staff, several of whom are his former students, nor of the skills he requires of them. Central to the approach, and its very life blood, lies the bifurcated aim of continuing the development of staff alongside that of students. This is made possible firstly, by regular staff meetings, 'to discuss the writing and invention of material which can be responded to at different levels yet at the same time be valuable to the groups as a whole'; and secondly, by attempting to engender the same excitement the teachers themselves have experienced. An additional virtue is that the discussions are 'not within a context of teacher and taught but rather of senior chairman amongst colleagues.' The matter of responding at the individual's own level to common stimulus is, after all, the premise on which mixed ability teaching is based. More radical perhaps - or traditional, depending on one's viewpoint - is the assertion that students need not necessarily perform at each lesson in order to learn, but this too has

its precedent in the master class where onlookers accept that the 'maestro' will focus his attention on only one or two students.

In summary, perhaps more than any of the interviewees Robert Plowright gave a patent account both of what he considered constituted group teaching and the advantages that might accrue from working in this way. He stressed that more learning situations arise by the diversity of response; that it develops discrimination in students; that their nervousness and self-consciousness dissipate; and that the group milieu provides reinforcement and encouragement. The group milieu is of prime concern, not as a means of disseminating information to the group in toto, but as a tool by which he stimulates and sparks off responses between the students.

4.6
Interviewee : Jean Horsfall, group teacher of cello

1. Antecedents

After Oxford and the RCM I was given the opportunity of teaching cello to groups in a London school. This was followed by a position at Sussex Rural Music School where I taught both violin and cello. Being confronted by a group of twelve violinists in my first term, I began to flounder until I attended a short course taken by Gertrude Collins. This was a complete revelation; what she was doing was exactly what I wanted to do so it was her example that I followed. From then on my group teaching began to take shape becoming progressively more structured as it evolved. Going straight into group teaching from University and College has meant that individual teaching has been a post-experience rather than, as is the case with many instrumental teachers, a previous experience. If I have to teach beginners by themselves I get bored and I'm sure they do - I would much prefer to teach them in a group. I still give individual lessons, more than I would like sometimes, but only with more advanced 'cellists.

2. Rationale

I do not think that there is a definition of group teaching; essentially it is a matter of interaction. I would say that I was working on the interaction between children to obtain the best out of them in the time available.

The aim is to get the children interested through the basics of melody, rhythm, intonation and reading.

The advantages are many: economically and time-wise group teaching is necessary but above all the children learn from each other; theory,

rhythmic training and intonation can all be dealt with in a group - the drudgery stops being drudgery.

3. Organisation

The school in which I teach has a scheme whereby in the summer term second-year juniors explore in groups both the violin and cello. After a course of lessons the groups, between eight and nine in number, are assessed and consent forms are sent to parents of those who wish to continue. Sometimes the assessments are incorrect; I may have thought a particular child was unsuitable, but if she is keen to try I am willing to take her - unless there is a complete physical handicap which would make playing impossible. I will take on children even if initially they appear not to hear properly; I'm a great believer in problems working out.

I like my lessons to be forty minutes in length though with my younger pupils thirty minutes is about their attention span. In either case you spend ten minutes setting up, tuning and packing away so I should add the rider that if I were to teach older pupils within a half hour lesson, then the cellos would need to be ready beforehand. It would be lovely to have lessons twice a week but at present it is just impracticable.

I keep a record of all my group activities; there is a separate record for each group. The amount of preparation necessary depends on the experience of the teacher; I use large charts so they take time to prepare. In addition to this there are innumerable things like sorting music and making quite sure that the basics of the lessons have been thought about. You can involve everyone, of that there is no question, but you have to think it out. Whilst correcting one child you have to involve the others either by making them all do the exercise and, though

keeping an eye on the group, concentrate on the one having problems, or by involving them as constructive critics. You have to work constantly on involvement and cater for the diverse standards within the group. You can do this in a variety of ways: by splitting up the music into bars or phrases ensuring that - though the children are playing one bar or phrase each - the bright, advanced child has the difficult bars and the less advanced the easier bars; by pairing pupils together so that the less able one is supported by someone he likes, not by someone he doesn't like; by getting some of them to pluck whilst others bow; and by giving the less advanced simple ostinati to accompany the others.

4. Constitution of the group

The size of the class is governed by the size of room you are using. I've taken large groups of violinists but six is a good number for cellists though I can manage up to ten if there is enough time and provided that the instruments are ready beforehand.

I think taking groups of advanced standard students is difficult, they have to be equally matched. Most of my group teaching nowadays is with young first and second-year cellists although in the past I've taken college students in groups of up to fifteen; however that's a totally different situation. At present all of my groups are of approximately the same age but in the past I have had to contend with disparate age ranges - that can become difficult. I try not to mix violinists and cellists though I have not always been able to manage this. At one time I was teaching violin, viola and cello together though I prefer not to; I know the Americans do but I think you need assistance.

5. Materials

The first and second year books of Cello Method by A.W. Benoy and

L. Burrows (Novello), seems to suit both groups and individuals. Much of the American material I dislike especially A Tune a Day by Herfurth (Chappell/Boston), but some of the Samuel Applebaum books (Belwin Mills) are good though the tunes are not always appropriate.

Rolland and the Americans generally tend to use extension fingering at a very early stage; I find I just cannot get on with that. Whilst I like Rolland's principles I cannot use his music; nor am I keen on Suzuki, the original books were bad, they started on D and A strings - obviously with violinists in mind. I use Forty Folk Tunes for the Violin by T. Widdicombe (Curwen), but unfortunately you can no longer purchase cello parts separately; Twenty Tunes for Beginners by E. Palmer and A. Best (OUP); and Lengzel and Peschek Cello Book 1 for Beginners (Editio Musica Budapest/Boosey and Hawkes) which is marvellous for group work.

Group work presupposes short pieces up to four lines in length; at this stage longer pieces are of little value. It is not that there is a shortage of material that can be used with groups, but that the material is of the wrong type. I tend not to adapt the pieces save for copying them out on large charts, but even then the children have their own copies in their tutor books. The Benoy and Burrows tutor requires little adaption as there are often three written parts, so if I have a really bright child I will ask him to play the teacher's line. Until recently the availability of material was getting better.

6. Methodology

I try to turn almost everything into a musical game; we have slow bow races - how long can you keep your bow going in one direction - if I want to teach them changing from pizzicato to bow hold, we will time each

other playing each note of an ascending major scale both plucked and bowed to see who is the fastest; and we will play scales in thirds or as rounds. So technique is treated as a game.

I teach firstly by rote and by example; I do not let them see the symbol. If you analyse what is involved in playing, say the note B on the A string, there are over nine different skills needed so the principle must be to teach one thing at a time. Although I take the reading fairly soon the sound comes first. I do not use improvisation or memory though I am sure I should. One of my children is apt to play both from memory and by ear, at the expense of reading and finger positions, this is not good. Singing is useful, especially if you can tie up with the method already established in the school, be it Kodály or otherwise; that way they will progress quicker - children have such compartmentalised minds.

7. Social interaction

The first essential is discipline, you have to have your class where you want it. When that is established, when you have them working with you, the element of competition has to be handled carefully. If you are teaching in a school that is highly competitive, geared to examinations, then the competitive element spurs the children on. With a school in which there is no competitiveness it is sometimes helpful to grade performances and so a sense of competition and emulation develops.

Knowledge of the individual is paramount. Just because you are teaching a group does not mean that you cannot know the individuals. For a time I taught in a school where there were many problem children and knowledge of the individuals was crucial.

One of the snags of group tuition is that a child may look at the fingers of another instead of reading the notes for himself. This is one

of the reasons that I use rounds at the beginner stage.

The consequences on the rest of the group of a student discontinuing lessons can vary. Sometimes one is only too thankful to be rid of them and the group proceeds happily on its way no longer having the disruptive influences. At other times it is like chickenpox, it becomes infectious and you lose children who really should continue; it can work both ways.

8. Teacher skills

Many instrumental teachers are taught to look for specific details, e.g. attending to the tip of a finger, but there comes a moment in group tuition when you have to go on even though you know something is wrong. It is a question of keeping going, of keeping the forward momentum of the group; you can become bogged down by minute details. You have to know where you are going but at the same time be flexible on the way.

I have strong feelings about the idea of putting good group instrumental teachers through a period of general classroom practice. Presumably the intention is that they will develop the skills required to handle groups. This is not necessarily the case. You can be a successful teacher of ten children or under, yet a terrible teacher of thirty. It is a disciplinary matter that is at issue. Much of the psychology covered in a teacher-training course should be replaced by commonsense. Mediocre teachers can turn into good ones provided that they have at least an outline to start with. Once they are experienced they can do what they like, but at the outset they need some guidelines. One way would be to work during one's probationary period with an experienced group teacher in order to learn what it takes. The theory at present is that you work out your own salvation, but unless you have done a substantial amount of observation with a group teacher, I cannot see

how you can.

I was involved in a RMSA one-term course in which students were attached for half their time to experienced group teachers, this was followed by a one-week intensive course and concluded by practice of teaching. Students who otherwise may not have made good group teachers came out of the course well-equipped and ready to begin their teaching careers.

9. Development

Group teaching can go beyond the elementary stages but it takes on a Continental master class character and that can be very stimulating at college level. Most of my group teaching, however, is at elementary level, usually by the third year of tuition they are ready for individual lessons and some, the exceptionally bright, are ready before that. In particular one child I had to take out in her third term as she was miles ahead; to keep her in a group would have ruined her.

Most of the children in my groups begin to hold parts on their own by the second term, even if only ostinati. It is a kind of elementary chamber music stage.

10. Learning outcomes

I encourage my eight and nine year-olds to play in junior orchestras and ensembles though only if they are familiar with the fingering of the pieces otherwise it can be disastrous. Ensemble experience and the competitive element within the group helps practice to some extent, particularly if they can practise together in school, but I have not found a way of developing sound habits of practising.

On the whole I think group-taught students have more idea of counting and metre. In the second term we play in two separate parts; initially

sniffing for the crotchet rests, in that way they become aware of the need to keep time. Some of them will ask if they can play the 'sniff piece'.

Success is determined by the children's enjoyment: how many children take graded examinations has little to do with it. If the children have enjoyed playing and they want to continue then I have achieved something. Even if the children have enjoyed it and they stop playing I believe the experience to be beneficial and similarly, I would regard that as success. I could not care less about examinations.

Interim commentary

Jean Horsfall is that rare thing: a group teacher who started out (and has continued) working with groups. Whilst like Yvonne Enoch she was influenced by Gertrude Collins, she differs from the other interviewees in the sense that she did not turn to group work after disillusionment with individual teaching but she learned to handle groups long before turning to individuals. That she did it this way round attests, to some measure at least, that her thesis has served her well over the years and that itself is especially telling in two further respects. Firstly, though she remains energetic and zestful, she is after all a retired music adviser; so to have been intent on pursuing a group course many years ago at the outset of her career, when others, if aware of the activity, were sceptical, shows a remarkable sense of personal commitment. Secondly, it is conceivable that just as erstwhile teachers of individuals have turned to group work after feeling dissatisfied teaching individuals, the reverse could also happen. Clearly, for Jean Horsfall this has not been the case; she admits to finding the

activity a constant source of interest.

Although a traditional disciplinarian, she is emphatic that the activity is essentially one of interaction between children. Interestingly, she links competition with emulation. Whilst she can be said to have an analytical mind she combines analytical power - the capacity necessary to any teacher be it of individual or group to stand back from the situation - with an awareness, which is vital for group teaching, of personality, time and place. Thus, though keeping in mind standards of musical excellence she has the practicality to pace the lessons and push ahead,'keeping the forward momentum of the group'. It is significant that she pressed that very point for it is this anchoring of the analytical to the pragmatic that, whilst not beyond the ken of less experienced practitioners they find especially elusive. In this respect the difference between the group teacher and the teacher of individual students would seem especially salient.

In the school where she teaches, students explore in groups the violin and the cello for a period of one term prior to assessment - what Victor Fox (cf. interview 4.8) terms a 'diagnostic circus'. She is not especially concerned by poor results in the selection tests as she believes optimistically in 'problems working out'. Consequently, she operates an open-door policy. The learning outcomes are correspondingly wide-ranging. Whether her students take or eschew examinations, success is in terms of enjoyment - beyond that she does not enlarge.

4.7
Interviewee : Peter Crump, composer and Suzuki piano teacher.

1. Antecedents

I have been teaching in this way for approximately nine years. My previous experience was of what one might term traditional piano teaching, the one-to-one relationship between teacher and pupil without others looking on. I use Suzuki techniques which involve the parent so it is basically a three-way relationship in the teaching situation. I continue to teach traditionally with the occasional pupil but at present I do not have any teenage pupils to whom the one-to-one relationship might be appropriate. I became interested in the approach after attending a talk given by Suzuki violinist Helen Brunner; what she said made absolute sense and it was clear that it was the right way for me.

2. Rationale

It is difficult to arrive at a definition of my own approach. There is a well-defined Suzuki way of teaching that is recognised in official Suzuki circles, represented in this country by the British Suzuki Institute. Suzuki and his associates in Japan have evolved a technique and repertoire down to very specific details and in 'official' eyes a Suzuki teacher is someone who uses the repertoire exclusively and follows the technique. That is the easy definition. I do not conform to this criteria in one or two respects even though I am pursuing a course the intention of which is to lead me to gain recognition. Firstly, I have been using my own repertoire that has evolved over many years in addition to Suzuki's repertoire and at present I am undecided in the long term whether to go on using both or abandon one or the other. Apart from that detail I have followed the techniques worked out in Matsumoto, and from my

experience of teaching young children through their parents, not an easy process, I am evolving and developing my teaching the whole time. You might describe my teaching as being based on the Suzuki ideal but profiting both from my own experience and any instruction I can obtain elsewhere. There is one important proviso: for the time being and possibly for many years to come I shall exercise freedom in the use of repertoire.

My aims are simply to produce in children as high a standard of piano playing as possible.

The advantages are many but two spring readily to mind; the involvement in music both in playing and in listening as fundamental a part of life as anything else; and in training the memory musically and for general education. The disadvantages need not be disadvantages if they are watched carefully and overcome. One of the criticisms levelled at the Suzuki approach is that the pupils do not learn to read; this I feel is an unfair criticism. Provided that the reading aspect is handled intelligently by the teacher concerned there need not be problems. A potential disadvantage is that being helped by his parents the child may become too dependent on them in practising and learning and therefore is in danger of not acquiring self-reliance. I insist that those are potential disadvantages which can be avoided if watched by both parent and teacher.

3. Organisation

You should not select children on principle nor should you give aptitude tests. It is axiomatic that all children are suitable pupils unless there is some obvious serious handicap. Other Suzuki teachers take great care in selecting suitable parents, they make them observe lessons

for a whole term on the grounds that this weeds out unsuitable parents. I have not done this. I like parents to observe one or two lessons but I have always taken a risk regarding their suitability and during the course of time the unsuitable ones have dropped out on their own accord. The reasons are twofold: firstly, for economic reasons I have not been in a position to turn away pupils; secondly, on principle I cannot see that you can distinguish between selection of pupils and selection of parents. You cannot select a parent without selecting the child at the same time so if you are not going to select children on principle therefore you should not select parents for the same reason.

I agree in essence with Suzuki who says that the lesson should determine its own length and that goes for the practice sessions as well. When the teacher or the parent feels that the lesson/practice session has reached a suitable termination point then that is the time to finish. Now there are obvious practical objections to running a teaching practice along those lines but the principle is commendable.

4. Constitution of the group

I am not going to offer an opinion on the optimum size of a group: I suppose a group should range from four pupils upwards. Normally I prefer to have children of the same age and ability range with those who have reached a similar point in the syllabus but in fact you can mix profitably children of different ranges, abilities and differing points of progress, far more than you might suppose.

Until I had my second piano moved to my studio, a fairly recent development, I used a small electronic organ to accompany and play with the children but it is not an integral part of my teaching equipment. I have several percussion instruments, tambourines, bongos and so on, but

children prefer claves. They are possibly the cheapest to buy, and the easist to manipulate to produce rhythmical accuracy for there are no distractions like, for example, jingles on a tambourine. So, in short, claves are the most useful percussion instruments.

5. Materials

I have devised my own syllabus and repertoire, much of which I have composed myself and some I have borrowed from classical sources. Frankly, it is based to a large extent on the Suzuki piano syllabus which, incidentally, I use with some children. My syllabus was devised at a time when there was no instruction available in Europe on the use of the Suzuki piano syllabus and I could not see myself working with it with very young children - from four years of age upwards. For example, I thought the first piece in the Suzuki Piano Method far too difficult for my pupils, many of the pieces were very repetitive and the harmonies were bland to a high degree - though that may well be a good thing. I wanted to use something more imaginative than the ordinary tonic and dominant harmonies and I would say, provisionally, that my syllabus is more intellectually demanding than the Suzuki. In fact musical thinking is very much at a discount in pure Suzuki. I remember one eminent Suzuki piano teacher distinguishing between ability and understanding, the implication being that you should go for ability. I think a lot of teachers in Britain make excessive demands on a young child's understanding but possibly Suzuki goes too far the other way. I have certainly found over a number of years' experience that though my syllabus may make demands on a child's intellect the demands are not excessive.

I have tried all sorts of material. In the past in addition to my own books I used The Musical Gateway by Donald Gray (Boosey & Hawkes) though

presently I am using it less and less. At the moment the John Thompson Modern Course for the Piano (Chappell/Boston) seems to be the best reading primer though, I admit I have not come to a final answer on this point - I am prepared to use any reading primer available.

6. Methodology

Musical games are an integral part of group lessons. The format is performance by the children of their pieces alternating with musical games of various sorts. Strictly speaking improvisation is not a feature of my approach but every so often a child will come up with a piece that he has composed. Nearly always the work will be absolutely correct in harmony according to the text book rules; they have achieved something naturally by improvising which would have taken years of study by the 'theoretical' method. One of our musical games consists of question and answer improvisations and responses. I also bring in at the outset elementary sol-fa though it is not part of the Suzuki approach.

7. Social interaction

Co-operation and competition is something you have to play by ear. From time to time I have found myself in situations in which I have been forced willy-nilly into a pastoral role, when I have found myself acting almost as a social worker between pupils and parents. As such it is hard to maintain the traditional role of the teacher, one of professional reserve. Pupils and parents have to feel a sense of community; the piano can too often be a solitary instrument.

8. Teacher skills

The inability to produce one's own material is not in itself a drawback. As for the 'average' instrumental teacher I think he or she should have the right temperament. For example I know of one teacher who

will not teach pupils below the age of nine simply because her skills do not run to teaching young children. This is her limitation, she admits it and this is clearly a right decision in her case.

In addition to the performance skills instrumental teachers are expected to possess, I would like them to be familiar with an approach, a method, or something even if they are selective in what they use of it. I would like to see music teachers undergo some training in handling people not only children but adults as well. A knowledge of human relationships is valuable if only because difficulties at home can obviously affect a child's performance and attitude to work.

9. Development

A beginner should be able to hold a part on his own in a matter of weeks. I would not mind them performing in front of others from the beginning but with very young children there can be problems. I run one group under the auspices of the local authority, part of an experimental scheme to occupy mothers and pre-school children in which all the children perform in front of the others right from the start. There are times, however, with young children when, if a child becomes temperamental, you have to clear the room and allow him to play on his own.

10. Learning outcomes

Because of the involvement of parents regular habits of practising are instilled in pupils.

Estimating success is difficult. The best I can give is an oversimplified answer as there are so many imponderables. I feel that my pupils are doing significantly better than they would be if I were teaching by more traditional methods; I regard that as success.

Interim commentary

Peter Crump teaches in accordance with certain Suzuki principles and modestly terms himself a Suzuki teacher, but his approach seems much more imaginative and eclectic than the undiluted method, which of course is taught individually though there are regular group meetings. Although he has built up a practice of teaching the piano using and adapting Suzuki principles, until recently he did not use the piano method devised by Suzuki himself. Peter Crump broadens out the method by use of sol-fa and by using his own repertoire - much of which he has composed. It is these things that set him apart from other Suzuki teachers. He is in effect seeking an equilibrium between oriental and occidental teaching strategies and weighing the evidence from this or that course of action.

In some ways the Suzuki method seems at variance with a group approach, possibly because of the traditions of the Japanese teacher-pupil relationship where little more is asked of the pupil than to meekly copy the teacher's example. However, for Peter Crump's first dictum about teachers: 'to be familiar with an approach, a method, or something even if they are selective in what they use of it' - echoes of Kenneth Simpson and implying that as teachers we are basically redecorators rather than restructurers - there would seem to be widespread agreement, as there would for his contention that,'the piano can too often be a solitary instrument.'

The Suzuki method is not the province of this study but since it features strongly in the transcript it may be worth staying with it for a moment to look at some points in common or in contrast to a group approach. Firstly, repetition is a key factor of the method. As adults we are easily bored by repetition but children, argues Suzuki, never

become bored with it. Of course passing quickly on to the next exercise when closer study would be beneficial, is a teaching point of which we have all been guilty. However, it is difficult to accept that children never become bored by repetition. Secondly, when taught individually the method allows the child to progress at his or her own speed, each step being thoroughly mastered before going on,but it is hard to see how this could happen in a group situation where some measure of momentum is necessary to maintain group solidarity. Thirdly, like other music educators, Suzuki stresses the need for an aural approach. Although others advocate imitation, rote and memory learning especially at the outset of their courses, Suzuki clings on to these much longer - no bad thing ipso facto. But Sheila Nelson, another of the interviewees who has adapted the method, feels that this may cause Suzuki-taught children to lag behind in note reading although they often race ahead in playing. Like Peter Crump, she aims for a more balanced approach and broadens the repertoire to include reading material at an early stage in the lessons.

Fourthly, unlike Peter Crump's pupils, children in Tower Hamlets are unlikely to gain much if any encouragement from home - there and in many other areas working mothers, or fathers come to that, do not have the time or inclination to begin such a course - but Sheila Nelson does not regard that as essential. Clearly this runs counter to Peter Crump's approach in which the parent is pivotal. By far the best reason for upholding the Suzuki tripartite arrangement, pupil, parent and teacher with the parent as a kingpin, is - if what Peter Crump says is empirically true - that it instils regular habits of practising. We might note, however, that the issue of dependency rears up again; dependency this time not on the pupil's peers but on his parents.

4.8

Interviewee: Victor Fox, Music Adviser City of Manchester

1. Antecedents

The structure of group teaching through music centres and music centre staff in schools started in 1971. All the music centres are placed in existing educational establishments usually schools but not necessarily so, and music centre activities may be regarded as an extension of a school day. One of the premises in the north of the city houses the electronic workshop; that is a music centre and nothing else but we hold to the philosophy of shared use so strongly that at present we are thinking in terms of transferring the workshop perhaps into one of the newly formed sixth form colleges. It is an important principle that the music centres have a presence in some other educational establishment. A music centre is a collection of staff, a staff room, a store room (in which there are very few instruments, for nearly everything we have is in use), and it is a kind of administrative agency for distributing resources. There are six music centres because Manchester may naturally be divided into smallish village units each having its own social identity. Wherever you have a social identity you usually have a musical expression for it. This was a factor that persuaded us to place music centres in particular areas. The six centres are linked in pairs. The structure of the Music Service comprises: music centres co-ordinator; three deputy co-ordinators; six music centre leaders who operate their own staff in the 'villages'; scale three teachers, who at present are either residual deputy centre leaders (since reorganisation that title no longer exists) or those who have a particular instrumental expertise; scale two teachers; and a broad base of scale one teachers and instructors, that is, unqualified teachers but qualified musicians.

Instructors who undertake additional responsibilities are positioned on a scale of allowances.

2. Rationale

There is a definite policy to teach groups all the way through the system. If pupils are being taught individually, they are holders of an exhibition which entitles them to one-to-one teaching for a time. What has happened over the development of group teaching is that the technique has been refined by some people so that we have legitimate group teaching situations at very high levels. I think of the sectional rehearsals of Archi da Camera, of Manchester Youth Wind Orchestra, as being group lessons at a high level obviously different from the master-class concept which are really individual lessons in the presence of others. It seems to us that through the whole line of progress, through eight or twelve years of the linear educational process of learning to play an instrument, there are times when one-to-one teaching is essential. If one accepts the plateau phenomenon of learning to play, then, from time to time, to move from one level to another, an injection of one-to-one teaching is absolutely right. I think a syndrome that we have dropped into is that once a person starts to have individual teaching anything else is regarded as second best. We don't believe that. We believe that massive progress may be made by returning people to a group teaching situation at a higher level. There is a total subscription to the thesis of group tuition.

3. Organisation

We admit no form of selection, except in the sense that students themselves select.

We have some situations where parents learn alongside pupils

(Suzuki inspired I suppose) and we enlist parental interest very extensively in concerts and various activities. If they want to bring their own previously acquired skill, or they want to start acquiring a skill, we let them in to do so. One or two of the music centre units, orchestras, bands and so on, have three generations of a family in membership. Length of lessons is not determined centrally. With a group of less-able children the lesson should be shorter because their attention span is shorter. We give guidance to teachers of junior exhibitioners (one-to-one teaching) that the lessons should be between forty and sixty minutes in length but I think that that should not be a rule. Some things must be left to the teachers' expertise and discretion. Lessons are usually weekly, but in some cases we double up during the week in schools in more disadvantaged areas, where again the attention span of the children may be very short and where social conditions suggest sparse practice opportunity and little parental support. In such areas children will require immediate satisfaction, so we can arrange for a group of children to see their teacher two or three times a week. We need that flexibility. These are the schools where, unless we go in on a regular basis to supervise practice, the children discontinue because everything else is against them. They cannot take home the instruments, they have not the personal resources to apply themselves to private practice so the only way is to structure the situation for them. In some cases this approach has produced surprising and highly gratifying results.

This structuring need not always be associated with social disadvantage. I have in mind another school in which three quarters of the whole school are involved in instrumental study, and its head teacher makes quite sure that each pupil finds a corner and some time each day to practise.

4. Constitution of the group

I would not make any pre-judgement on the size of groups. We have very effective guitar groups of fifteen or more and elsewhere we have had two teachers team-teaching groups of thirty violinists. On the other hand, groups of four or five are much more common.

There is one school that runs a 'diagnostic circus' (see section 6 below) for its first year. For years two to five there is a programme of tuition in the usual disciplines at progressive levels, into which pupils are drawn from other subjects on a four week rota. Thus, all these groups are composed of 12 - 16 year olds. The fact that most of our instrumental teaching is by withdrawal across the school means of course that teaching is usually to mixed-age groups. The lateral structure of the secondary school need not inhibit the age-composition of instrumental music classes.

5. Materials

There is not very much music truly conceived for group music teaching. The Eta Cohen Violin Method is widely used, but although it claims suitability for group tuition, it seems to assume that individuals will, in their practices, want to play something which is satisfactory in itself. Its use simply extends the use of solo-teaching material to the group situation. The Doflein Method, however, from the beginning has two-part and small ensemble pieces, suggesting from the outset that one learns to play an instrument in order to be part of an ensemble.

6. Methodology

It is well established that music in school is instrumental as well as vocal. Instrumental tuition is essential to the curriculum, and for as many people as want to come into it. We would want to meet the wish of

anybody to have the experience at some time of playing a musical instrument. We have twelve schemes in secondary schools where, accepting that the pre-secondary school experience of music may have been scant, we add six or so music-centre staff to the school's resident staff to teach music to a complete year group, usually to first year pupils. In an eight form entry school, there would be two sessions for four forms each in two waves divided into groups of fifteen or so, with as many disciplines as teachers available. The pupils change activity at half-term or the end of term. At the end of a year we may ask which experience had they particularly enjoyed. From there, they may take up their interest through the normal peripatetic provision but what this also accepts is that, if children feel none of the experience were of interest, they have the opportunity to contract out altogether. For this reason, second chance opportunity must be offered later in the system for older pupils and adults.

7. Social interaction

Our group teachers seem to know the individual pupils very well. Of course they are teaching far fewer than a general class music teacher. Often teachers feel aggrieved when children discontinue lessons but we all make choices and consequently I think that one has to be understanding of children who choose to develop some other interest.

In group teaching the aim is obviously to involve all the pupils at any one time but that cannot always happen. Recently I observed two consecutive groups taught by a wind teacher in which the first group, comprising eight children of around grade IV to V standard, was well taught and this was a group lesson in the true sense; but in the lesson which immediately followed, four grade VI children were present at an

individual lesson - one person was taught whilst the others listened. How you can get that kind of confusion in the mind of a teacher who has applied a first-rate group teaching technique to one class and immediately followed it by a somewhat obtuse rejection of a group approach where one could certainly have been operated, I don't know. It would be naive to assume that any teacher is going to be consistently exemplary. Sometimes a lesson will work extremely well and at other times it is a complete disaster. The teacher knows it.

8. Teacher skills

I think that the skills required to teach groups can be acquired. A new entrant to group teaching has much to come to terms with. Having accepted a job as a group teacher however, he has an obligation to come to terms with it pretty quickly because that will have been the basis on which he had applied for the job. I don't think there can be any compromise of attitude thereafter.

The attributes I would look for in a group teacher are that they should themselves be good performers; that they should understand the nature of their instruments and the requirements that can be made of them; that they should have a good knowledge of repertory; that they should be patient, and understand the difficulties of their pupils. Vigilance is needed in group teaching because as much is done by the eye as by the ear. They need catholicity of taste and a readiness to go into the large social music-making situations. The skills required to teach in groups are not all comparable with those of a general class teacher. The numbers of pupils in general class music lessons are far larger than those of most group instrumental lessons. Classroom skills may have in addition some of the attributes of show business, or the lecture-recital. The

emphasis in group teaching of instruments is on skill acquisition, and that is not the emphasis of class teaching at all. I think that many instrumentalists could become effective group teachers, though they would have to know clearly what was expected of them, and be quite ready for their achievements to be evaluated. It would not do them any harm to take up a completely different instrument and start learning all over again to realise how difficult skills are to acquire.

I would like us to question our practice of training instrumentalists as soloists. Conservatoires pick up people who have had individual lessons and continue to train them as individualists to play concerti.

By way of in-service training, our teachers see examples of good practice. Well known practitioners of group tuition have been here to show us how they work. I am a firm believer in the usefulness of self-help and experience. I think the whole business of self-evaluation in teaching is very important.

9. Development

We allow time in our teachers' timetables for preparation. We engage them to work a twenty-seven and a half hour week, twenty-three hours are spent in class contact, the other four and a half hours comprise 'playing-time', in which they play in ensembles, 'preparation-time' in which they can find new imaginative material, make arrangements and compose, and 'travelling time'.

Most of our woodwind teachers teach more than one instrument at least to a modest level; then we have specialist help. Brass teachers generally teach all instruments in the Brass family. For specialists on valve instruments, the trombone may cause a few problems, and some brass band specialists avoid french horn, quite illogically.

Children respond well to well-thought-out group teaching methods and materials. If one takes the methodology of the individual lesson and tries to apply it, without adaptation to a group, one is not going to achieve very much.

10. Learning outcomes

One of the developments we are considering now is the establishment of advanced music study centres where people will not simply learn their instrument but play in various kinds of ensembles, receive musicianship and keyboard tuition and each student will be answerable to a tutor who will construct and supervise that person's timetable. Once people have worked through to an intermediate instrumental level there is a more urgent need for general musicianship classes.

It is difficult to define success in music education. We are happy when we see very many people joining ensembles of all kinds, and being helped all the time to improve quality of performance and breadth of experience. We would be unhappy if we were struggling to maintain a very expensive facility for an élite engaged in a narrow avenue of musical interest.

Interim commentary

This interview provides a bird's-eye view of group teaching as it takes place in one authority. The breadth of view obtained is illuminative, not only in that it gives a composite picture of how conjointly individual and group teaching might be set up and developed, but in that it throws light on certain key areas around which possible difficulties could centre, namely:

The partnership which exists between music staff in schools and

centralised music staff, the adviser being something of a link-man. The nexus of music centres, on which Victor Fox expatiated and is clearly firmly committed. The pyramidal structure of the instrumental scheme. The doubling-up of lessons and attempts to structure practice in areas of disadvantage and underprivilege, where perhaps a different kind of motivation is required from the intrinsic satisfaction which may be gained from a solitary lesson.
The recognition of a situation-centred model of music teaching. To paraphrase what Victor Fox said: wherever there is a social identity there is usually a corresponding musical expression. (This is explored in more depth later in the scenarios.)

Encouraging though the picture emerges, the Music Service is not one whit complacent. The scheme is assiduously monitored, periodically reviewed and ways to improve it are constantly being sought. Eclectic, the staff continually toy with new ideas. Passing reference was made of an advanced music study centre similar to Avon's at Bristol. Manchester, after all, does not have a monopoly on ideas. At the time of the interview an internal, 22-page quinquennial report, analytically traversing primary, secondary and adult sectors of music education, had recently been carried out and sections of it relate directly to this study.

Overall the report does not cast aspersions, it alludes to Manchester's achievements; the tone is encouraging despite the understated prose. Whilst to take one LEA's figures and extrapolate from them would be to outdistance the evidence, at least one point of information which can be gleaned from the report would appear to have relevance outside of the immediate locality:

Each week 29 heads of department spend 166 hours on 'extra-curricular' acitivites; an average of 5.7 hours, and amounting to the work of 7 full-time equivalent teachers.
It is conjectural how many more music teachers could be employed then over the length and breadth of the country.

The report recognises that many music teachers are 'back runners in the promotion race' and yet there are 'no more exacting tasks in education than running a successful music scene either in schools or centres'. It cites, as a possible reason for the relatively small numbers of musicians in senior posts, that because music departments are 'thinly staffed, the voice of the music teacher has rare opportunity to range over general educational topics.' Certainly the work-load for music staff can be excessive but Manchester is making an effort to spread some of the load. Presently ten schools run curriculum development projects, similar to that described in interview, with music centre staff sharing the teaching.

Interestingly, of the 48 musical skills classes in the post-16 sector, there are 18 piano classes (280 students), something which will gladden the hearts of group piano teachers. Moreover, the writers of the report reveal that the work of the piano classes was amongst the most rewarding seen:

> . . .it was possible to see a group of 15 students working profitably together. The technique is to identify teaching points in the performance the student brings . . .the happy accident of the appearance of a wide range of styles of music and the identification of typical problems made the class constantly interesting for all.

But the teaching of adults in groups is not confined purely to the post-16 sector. In addition to the 18,249 pupils in schools taking lessons each week from music centre staff, some 267 teachers acquire instrumental

skills alongside them and a further 133 adults join centre activities of one kind or another. Surely many more authorities could make similar provision for peripatetics to gain further instrumental skills so that they might widen the range of instruments taught.

It was heartening too, to learn of structured in-service training for practising teachers to refresh or re-equip themselves and of one-day courses,some of which were given by practitioners interviewed in this study. But there appears little in the way of practical help during the all-important induction period for new entrants to teaching lacking in know-how. The comment Victor Fox made that 'a new entrant to group teaching has much to come to terms with', is true enough, though it hardly helps towards an answer. And then there is the question of whether potential teachers ought to spend much of their initial training period learning to be soloists. Apart from being inappropriate in many cases it inculcates an attitude in potential teachers, of group lessons as perhaps being an economic if not particularly desirable modus docendi. Hardly surprising then, if the pupils and their parents come to regard group lessons as 'second best'. But again there are efforts to counter this image. A programme for a week of music-making by Manchester school children gives on its front cover a background note of the development of music education in the City. Group tuition figures strongly in rubric.

4.9
Interviewee : Robert Spencer, guitarist (and lutenist)

1. Antecedents

I began teaching groups of guitarists some twenty-five years ago whilst I was a student at Dartington. I remember taking evening classes in the village and, as is usual in adult education, I had to take anyone who came along, so it was a matter of working out a method that would work with pupils of mixed ability. There was no theory involved: what evolved was a practical response to the problem of teaching a large class. I duplicated some sheets with general instructions and chords written on them, and I remember contacting Imogen Holst and Alan Frank with the idea of printing the material. I suppose everyone wants to get into print but perhaps my reasons were a little more altruistic in that it was a matter of having something that one could actually give away to students. In the end I duplicated the material myself all on separate sheets. This approach I followed afterwards for very specific reasons - it began, I suppose, about 1957. When I left music school I was so busy trying to establish a career I did not do any group teaching for some years, until I moved to my present address and was looking around for some jobs to do as well as duo recital work with my wife, Jill Nott-Bower. Florence James, Head of Music in the local girls' school, Loughton, wanted someone to teach guitar. As she had a lively and effective approach towards teaching music in general, as guitar was at the height of its popularity then, and as the lessons were to be run as a lunch-time and after-school activity, many of the girls wanted to play, so we decided on a class approach. When I started at Loughton in 1965 I looked up my old material which I had prepared almost ten years earlier. I began to revamp it on the principle that producing quick results creates the morale in pupils to do the

necessary work to progress. It is a very simple approach to teaching but a good one. Eventually the class proved so popular that I reached a stage whereby the numbers of students could not be increased further without losing some of the quality of what they learned.

I no longer give individual guitar lessons though I teach lute at the Royal Academy of Music. In addition to that I take master-classes in Lute Song, at the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh, at the RAM and at the Early Music Centre. But the master-class is different from group teaching; it is teaching one pupil with others listening in.

2. Rationale

It was a matter of being able to teach a lot of people in less of my time than if I taught them individually. I do not think that they lost out because they received one tenth of my attention over the lesson time with a class of ten pupils. The mathematics are not quite as obvious as that; I estimate that I gave each pupil about half my time.

The aim of education is to help each person discover and develop his particular abilities: and to create a success for that person in his particular ability affects positively his whole approach to whatever he tackles thereafter. If you have an understanding of that as being one of the key ideas behind education, then I think you can make a success in any particular field.

Group tuition has many advantages over individual tuition: firstly, the shy individual can hide himself, or herself, very easily within the group. Even though I notice that happening I may not wish to draw attention to it. The shy one is not exposed; he or she can swim along with the tide eventually gaining the confidence that is lacking initially. That is a very positive gain which you cannot provide in an individual

lesson. Secondly, pupils learn in a kind of master-class situation where, whilst pointing out something to one person, the others overhear and put themselves in the position of that pupil. Also, in my case, as they were paying themselves it was considerably cheaper than if they were coming for individual lessons.

3. Organisation

My experience has proved that one's judgement about people, in any stage of their career, is not infallible. Learning depends so much on morale - how one feels about oneself and the subject. That is why I place so much emphasis on boosting morale to create an enthusiastic learning ambience. By selecting you can easily dismiss people who should not have been rejected.

With left-handed people I try to persuade them into playing right-handed because in playing the guitar both hands are used fairly equally and I cannot believe it makes a great deal of difference which way you play; left-handed players have to restring any guitar they wish to play.

I think that you can work out the length of group lessons quite precisely. I took ten to fifteen pupils in each group, and therefore, with time for tuning at the beginning and all the practicalities of group tuition, the half an hour suggested by the school timetable was rather too short. Once they were past the beginner stage they would tune up before the lessons so I could reduce the time spent on tuning to a quick check at the start of each lesson. Forty minutes is ideal but thirty is possible provided that the instruments are tuned and that you have the method carefully worked out so that first you revise what you have done, then you teach one new thing and one new thing only. Of course, the length of the lesson will also depend on the age of the

students.

With beginners I would arrange two lessons in the first week ie., within a one-week span they had three lessons. There is so little you can do in the first lesson; for example you can't really cope with the tuning problems. The second lesson is really a supervised practice. If I could have arranged it, I would have taught four lessons within the first two weeks, to enable them to get off to a flying start. The whole thing comes down to morale, the morale you can build up within the group. If they are keen to come to the lessons and if they can see the progress, they work. You have to set off on the crest of the wave of their initial enthusiasm and remain there; you cannot afford to have someone falling in with a splash. That would affect the whole class adversely.

I kept a work sheet of every class, a list of the songs together with the order in which I had taught them and a list of the points of technique that I had covered.

You cannot afford to have passengers. If you are working on the principle that every week you are going to give out a new piece, you have to assume that everyone in the class has digested last week's work. Pupils cannot be gazing out of the window for long, particularly in a thirty or forty minute lesson; there is not the time. It is a matter of momentum, to achieve which one has to organise the material very carefully, making sure that the steps forward are small and logical.

4. Constitution of the group

If the group is too small in number the students can become self-conscious: if too many, they feel the lack of personal contact with you and it is easier for them not to concentrate. A group between eight and twelve in number worked well with this particular material. When teaching

teachers my groups went up to more than thirty, but those classes were not as good as the groups of children at actually listening to what you said! Perhaps they had got out of the habit of learning.

There would be twenty or thirty students in a year's intake who wanted to play, so that would make two or three classes. Inevitably there were drop-outs, not always through failure, so I would amalgamate groups when they reached a certain stage. Senior pupils, those who had been playing for three or four years, I would take in smaller groups.

5. Materials

I did not use any tutor books because I could not find any that used this system of varying the material according to the needs of the group, which I felt was essential for class tuition. If you gave out a tutor how could you hold a class together if the keen ones had already played everything whilst the slow ones could not cope with page five? The class would have just fallen apart, so I had to work on separate sheet material. The material was created according to the progress, when something seemed to be needed I supplied it.

The next problem was how to grade the material so that the pupils could progress, see their progress, and not at any point reach a situation, which happens so often with people who teach themselves, where the next step seems insurmountable. Frequently, the first two or three lessons go splendidly merely by following the tutor book, then suddenly at page 5 of a 60 page tutor there seems an enormous mountain and, frankly, most people don't ever scale that mountain. So over the years 1965 to about 1974, I arranged a lot of songs with guitar accompaniment, from the simplest which students could play at the second lesson, up to those for which they had to read staff notation quite proficiently in order to play and which would

stretch players in their fourth or fifth year of lessons. I ended up with a hundred or more songs which I have never published. That fact I feel worked well for the system, as being unpublished in book form the material was totally flexible. Firstly, the student did not know what was going to crop up next week and secondly, I didn't know until I had taught that week's work what would feed best into a particular group at the stage it had reached. The material was designed both to push them on, yet not to be so difficult that they felt overstretched or they would begin to lose interest - you could be totally subtle about the progression. I have an enormous filing cabinet in which I keep all these songs and my wife is now using the same method. Also I think the act of giving out a new sheet of music to the class boosted its morale by giving a sense of achievement (the last piece has been learnt, here is the next) and anticipation (what is it?) which cannot be done by using a book, which has no novelty value after the first lesson.

6. Methodology

I tended not to use musical games. If I had been dealing with younger children then I may well have used them. In any case games are only of use in holding interest or in removing the boredom of regularity; I simply did not need to do that with older children, and with the novelty value of my method of separate sheet music.

I believe in having deadlines in the form of a school concert, or a performance at a local handicapped-people's home. That way there is a reason to practise, there is a deadline and that is terribly important in all music tuition. I think you perform far better if you play from memory than if you have your nose stuck in a copy, so I encouraged the students to play from memory, though most found it difficult. If you

teach music as a literary subject, something that is always written down, then you end up coming to rely on that piece of paper. Most people are good at either playing from memory or they are good readers; it is very difficult to mix the two, they tend to be mutually exclusive. I did not use improvisation though I feel one should. Probably through my own lack of ability in this respect I was unable to encourage others to improvise.

7. Social interaction

I suppose there is an element of competition, though it is more a matter of doing well to please yourself and the teacher. I do not think that competition or co-operation are very significant. Each student was doing her own thing and I had to keep an eye on all of them to make certain that they understood what was being learnt. I found that relatively easy to do - I did notice if an individual in a group of ten was floundering. Ultimately some of the girls were able to sing and play without the support of the class, and that is the ideal one aims for, but they needed that support while learning, to carry them through those things each one found difficult.

I would like to know what the long term effects of the group teaching were, but I always felt that the students had learned something which could be with them for life. It was not something which was learnt and then lost. The group teaching side of it, I think, helped a lot of those who would not have had that experience otherwise. It is not only for the teaching of the music that the group method is so valuable; it is for the human contact, the social interaction side; getting over the business of nerves, self-consciousness and so on. There, group teaching can be enormously valuable.

8. Teacher skills

I wonder if the ability to teach and help people is something you are born with? It comes down to inbuilt personality as to whether you can make a success of it, to whether it is what you want to do. Probably the most important attribute in the successful group teacher is an awareness of precisely what is happening in the group at any given moment. It is like being an actor, you have to be very sensitive to know exactly what is happening and then by automatic reflex you change what you are doing to cope with that situation. For example: to notice immediately if someone walks into the room; to be aware of everything that is happening; to use that interruption and build it into the 'act'. You have to have total control; take the lead. I suppose the skills are comparable to those of a general class teacher.

One-to-one teaching means that a pupil plays something and you look for particular problems in that person's playing. In group teaching it is different. I worked out a technique of teaching guitar which I thought worked for anybody. It is a way of learning the guitar quickly and getting a lot of fun from it at almost any level. That is a different sort of teaching from analysing a technical problem. A group teacher needs to be very organised and clear about what he is aiming to do, though the way to achieve that may well be worked out by trial-and-error. What does not work you immediately spot and instead feed in something which corrects it. It is a matter of being highly organised, of having the desire and will to make it work. You have to be self-critical if you are to work out a system successfully, be prepared to be totally honest and admit that something was a failure, then find something else which is a success.

9. Development

In order to gain quick results the guitar was learned in conjunction with singing, so the student was doing two musical things at once. The two separately are simple but put together they sound impressive, particularly to the participant. Within three weeks they were able to plod through the first self-accompanied song on their own. Using the voice meant that it was possible to obtain encouraging results after a couple of weeks. I imagine that the early stages of violin lessons can be very discouraging for the pupil. Violin teachers must have to work out many clever ideas to push pupils through that initial period.

I worked on a number of different principles. Although this was class teaching I thought it important that when each student did something on his own it was musically complete. For example, if you are a double bass player practising an orchestral passage you are probably playing musical gobbledegook; it does not mean very much until you come together with other instrumentalists. The material I used was absolutely complete within itself, so instead of teaching, say a quartet of guitarists, each one playing a different line, I taught each person to both sing and play a complete song - tune, bass, harmony and words. I thought it important that each student could work on his own at home at a complete musical composition, and all that happened in class was that he gained moral and numerical support and the group pressure not to stop for little mistakes. I was, however, determined from the beginning that instead of just strumming the guitar, the girls would learn in such a way that those who wished to go on to play solo guitar could do so without any hiccup: ie., they were taught to read staff notation separating the bass from the inner harmony, albeit in a rather backhanded way they hardly noticed. I do not

know whether other people use this technique but it worked very well in my case. This involves playing the guitar initially from chord diagrams (left-hand finger positions), but all guitar accompaniments, from the first, were also written out in staff notation. By this duplicated notation, the first easier to assimilate than the second at the beginner level, staff notation was assimilated in very easy stages.

Motivation is essential for any learning. The battle you are fighting is for the total involvement of the pupil. Once you have won that, you guide and gently push. You have to get the enthusiasm to come from the pupil which is facilitated if the general morale of the class is at a high pitch from the word go. Arranging performances as I mentioned before, is a sure-fire way of rekindling enthusiasm and creates a change of pattern for the lessons - ie., some weeks spent improving existing repertoire - instead of the usual 'new-song-a-week' routine.

'Performance' - without a conductor but with an appointed 'leader' begins to train the pupils in awareness, listening to each other - in fact ensemble playing.

10. Learning outcomes

There had to be spin-offs in order to progress but I was not consciously aware of widening the range of skills taught. I made a virtue of not asking too much, I would say ten minutes practice per day was sufficient but insist on daily practice. The pressure of the group, and of the individual student not wishing to let the group down, also encouraged practice.

In a way group work is unrhythmic; it has to be metronomic, you cannot be elastic. Being truly rhythmic is knowing how far to stretch the elasticity of strict tempo without it breaking. Songs which, sung by

individuals would have been more expressive, were metronomic in class. In groups you teach strict tempo, which anyway has to be learned before more subtlety of rhythm can be experimented with.

Recently I was listening to a lutenist accompanying a singer. Every two bars or so he stopped playing, leaving the singer high and dry, complaining that the music was too difficult. There was a total lack of continuity. Once you have started you must keep going, even if you have to miss out two bars you must pick up on the third bar. Group lessons, for what most people regard as a solo instrument, are a marvellous way to learn that skill.

I was using group tuition as a means of helping individuals, and not groups, so success is to be judged solely by the success of the individual - whether a particular student was eventually able to play the guitar on his or her own. For many students, learning in a group was the best way of achieving this aim.

Interim commentary

Distinguished lutenist and guitarist Robert Spencer, evolved a way of teaching classes of would-be guitarists. Wrought from the practical situations he encountered as a student teacher, he was anxious to point out that there was 'no theory involved'. Yet whether a rationale was inherent or subliminal the work had a clear and positive sense of direction. Key to the success of the approach was the 'giveaway' idea of using separate copies which students could keep, new pieces being given out weekly. As implied in the transcript the difficulties of publishing and marketing such a course are substantial though not insuperable. Doubts were expressed as to the gradation of published tutor books, whether

materials are sequenced logically, whether though progressive, step by step, the gradients are sufficiently easy for the majority of students to take in their stride. The impasse after an almost too easy start would seem not only to apply to guitar manuals but to the whole gamut of instrumental tutors.

The alleged shortcomings of the performer practising as a teacher are that the teaching is unstructured, ad hoc, at best a stopgap in between professional engagements. Insofar as Robert Spencer is concerned clearly this is not the case; that much is apparent from the transcript. Like Kenneth van Barthold, he not only manages to combine the dual roles of performer and teacher but he distinguishes himself in both spheres. Doubtless, the attributes of self-discipline and self-criticism so essential for the professional performer, carry over into group teaching but as Spencer asserts, it is also 'a matter of being highly organised' coupled with 'the desire and will to make it work'. Moreover, his insistence on deadlines, learning pieces within a finite time, gives momentum and provides a reason for practice.

It is as Robert Spencer openly admits, some time since he taught groups of guitarists in school, but looking back from the perspective of today he sees that period objectively and the video films of his work at Loughton are testimony to the standards he achieved. Frequent criticisms levelled at those films are that the students are passive and unresponsive but this is not how the writer sees them. Certainly, Spencer's coaxing manner did much to set the atmosphere but there are further considerations to be borne in mind. Firstly, the kind of ethos that prevailed in single sex selective schools during the 'sixties,and secondly, though the classes were large, comprising girls of mostly the same year-group, the

lessons were run as lunch time, extra-curricular activities and paid for directly by parents, thus the motivation within what was after all a minority-interest activity, was significant from the outset. The acid test is, of course, whether the girls enjoyed the experience albeit in their quiet, reserved way, and that one can deduce from the films.

4.10
Interviewee : Julia Lee, group piano teacher

1. Antecedents

Over twenty years ago I was an assistant lecturer responsible for piano teaching at Darlington College of Education. The senior lecturer was Dr. Florence Windebank whom I regarded as a very enterprising person and she had the idea that the students who were not doing main course music should learn to play the piano, purely as a keyboard skill so that they could play easy songs, accompaniments and pieces for their classes. It was mainly for infant and junior trained teachers and one of my responsibilities was to take these students in groups. At my interview I was asked what I would do if I was faced with six students for piano lessons; at the time I had absolutely no idea what group teaching involved but I gave the answer that I would try to see that they all had plenty to do all the time. Whether that was the right answer or not I was offered the job and that was my initiation into group teaching. The experiment certainly worked, the students learnt to read music better than they could have done from recorder or singing lessons, they understood the system of keys and they seemed to get a lot out of the experience generally. Some years later I came into contact with Yvonne Enoch; she was invited to do a series of lecture tours of colleges in the area. I saw her demonstrate with some children and I was very impressed though it seemed surprising to me that her ideas were not taken up by the local area authorities. Ten years ago I was appointed to teach theory at the York music centre, mainly to those learning orchestral instruments. When I asked if I could start piano groups the adviser, Dr. John Paynter, said that provided there was time within the Saturday

morning activities and that there was a need, I could start classes immediately. I found that there was a terrific area of need; children really did not know what the piano could sound like. When I played to them in the theory lessons to demonstrate, it promptly struck up a chordal interest in them. So all in all I suppose my group teaching goes back some twenty-five years though there was a gap from group teaching students at Darlington with Dr. Windebank, who was much ahead of her time and unappreciated, to putting it into practice with children in York. I continue to teach individuals nowadays though I am trying to get out of it. I will not teach beginners individually at all.

2. Rationale

I aim to put over the same material to a group of children as I would do in an individual lesson of the same standard; at once involving them all yet not being afraid of letting some of them sit and listen because this too is valuable. It is a question of doing as well in a group situation as you would in an individual lesson. The aim of group teaching as opposed to individual teaching is to involve more people in an area of instruction than would normally have the opportunity.

I think that the advantages are more obvious than the disadvantages; if I didn't feel it was more advantageous I would not be doing it. With children and beginners particularly, being able to listen to someone else rather than to try and meet the standards of an adult teacher is beneficial and the stimulus of playing to others is exactly the same as going to an orchestral, band or ensemble rehearsal. The only disadvantage is that you cannot give a great deal of time to one pupil that is why in my book I advocate auditioning the children. I interview them and their parents to try to get a group as near to the same standard of maturity,

intelligence and comprehension as possible. However, as I have been working in a music centre, I have had to take anybody so the groups have been a complete mixture.

3. Organisation

I would select for private pupils because I think you have a different situation. If parents are going to pay for lessons they are likely to be very interested and they will monitor the progress much more keenly than parents who are getting tuition within a county scheme. That is not to say county groups are less appreciative but as a private teacher you have to be on your mettle and you stand or fall by your results. I would like to select for the reason of obtaining those pupils who are going to benefit. In the case of very young children it would take the form of the tests advocated by Peter Crump, ie. to see if they can respond, imitate, copy, co-ordinate and understand. If you are going to select it can only be in a very primitive way especially if you want to start them young.

Parental support is certainly desirable and I would say necessary. What would you have in place of parental support, apathy? They could not be discouraging, the fact that they want their children to learn presupposes that there ought to be some support. I encourage the parents to come to the lessons particularly at the outset though when the children reach twelve years of age, or so, then I don't like parents coming in; those children need to develop their own discipline, their own form of practice and at that stage parental interference can be dangerous. Even support can be misinterpreted by a sensitive teenager; there is a big difference between younger children from five to eight or nine years of age, and ten-year olds upwards. The optimum lesson time for any age is

forty to forty-five minutes. Even the youngest ones, five year olds, are managing to survive forty minutes without losing interest. Older pupils can certainly take forty-five minutes and longer but at present there is not the time to allow for longer lessons. Adults like one or two hours depending on the numbers, they get so enthusiastic that they would stay all evening if it were possible.

I have never had the opportunity to give lessons more frequently than once a week. Within the limits of time available which necessarily has to be after the school day, it would be impossible to see the same number of children twice a week. Seeing them more often I think could be a good thing for a short time, perhaps a term of more concentrated lessons, then returning to weekly lessons. I am very much in favour of being more flexible, getting away from the rigid idea that you have to have a once-a-week lesson all your life. I have to say that my ideas keep changing, in one sense it is a pity that one has to write a book, I think Yvonne Enoch made this point, as by the time the publishers print your words you have moved on to something else. The early stages of learning to teach groups require a lot of preparation but as you gain more experience the work evolves from one week to another. At first you would have to spend as much time preparing as you would actually giving the lesson. After a year or two you know what line the work will take so you can spend less time preparing. What is more important is writing-up after the lessons the course a particular group has taken and if something did not go very well thinking out why. Was the material beyond their range or was it unsuitable for other reasons? A post-mortem is more valuable than to prepare too much beforehand.

The amount of involvement depends on the stage the group has reached.

There is a time when they have to play individually with the others listening attentively. The way to ensure that they are listening is to ask questions around the group. If a child has not played very well then I will ask him how he could have played better. If he doesn't know someone in the group will be ready to either jump on his seat to demonstrate or give the correct answer.

Different standards and rates of progress within a group are easier to cope with if the members are well matched at the beginning. The challenge to any group teacher is in not singling one out, either because he is too slow or too quick. If you have a variety of activities within a lesson then you can cover that because one child may be quick in one way but not necessarily so in another.

4. Constitution of the group

Three or four children in a group piano lesson is ideal, particularly with little ones, as you can get all four at the keyboard at the same time. Adult groups can be of virtually any size, that is rather different because for much of the time they are listening to one person playing. Obviously, for the purpose of group involvement at the piano, you have to limit the size of the group. If children start in a group of four then I will try to retain that number but if one were to drop out then I would leave it as a group of three. Also it is preferable to have a very narrow age-range within a group.

5. Materials

I write a lot of my own material especially in the early stages. This is how the letter tunes, described in my book, evolved in the hope that teachers would make up their own. I find, however, that teachers really want material written for them. I have invented rhymes that the children

play on one note probably as a substitute for percussion instruments. There is no group tutor as far as I know in this country, although I believe there are several in America. I use the same tutor books that I would use in an individual lesson. Similarly I try not to dictate to teachers, I feel that if they are to succeed in group teaching they need to think out how to apply their favourite tutor to the group situation.

6. Methodology

Musical games are important for the younger pupils; for the first three weeks my group of five-year-olds spent much of the time doing right hand, left hand games; finger numbering and rhymes. I simply write down the fingering in their spiral notebooks: the letters of the keyboard, CC DD EE DD C; 11 22 33 22 1; or make up a rhyme, "Now my music lesson has begun." These children are too young for even the large stave manuscript so we write on rough paper and they trace and crayon huge treble clefs. This is one of the advantages of group teaching compared to a private lesson; they can do some notational work as an interlude in the lesson, it is a completely different activity.

I think it is essential that they become used to looking up at the music. This is a problem special to the piano. Children invariably look down at their fingers if you let them. This is why I prefer them to be reading letters of the alphabet on a piece of paper rather than playing from memory. Before they can read notation I like them to use the letters of the notes. Bastien and a lot of the American teachers use this, shaping the letters the way the music is going ie. ascending and descending diagonally as in the example given:

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        EE
     DD    DD
  CC          C
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Singing is very important, the Curwen hand signs are marvellous because the movement is something that they can do and I am convinced that it is the right approach.

7. Social interaction

It is vital to keep the balance between competition and co-operation. The group would fall apart if the children became too competitive. I try to play competition down because it is the childrens' natural tendency and worst still the parents! Competition has to be kept in check, they have to realise that they are working together and for the most part this happens. It is always a case of the teacher being one jump ahead, of being able to steer the attitude in a positive direction.

I think of my group pupils as just as much individuals as my private pupils. I am very much aware of the differences of personality and the fact that they are all different makes the group. They all contribute but it is essential to have a rota so that each person in turn has the experience of playing first in the lessons. Even if a child is a slow sight reader the fact that he has to play first for some of the lessons has a marked effect on him; he knows he cannot get out of it and it provides the stimulus to practise.

If there are good reasons for a student discontinuing lessons then his opting to discontinue will not necessarily have a damaging effect on the rest of the group. If they are valid, acceptable reasons then provided that they are accepted by the group, all is well. The person who left the group would, in all probability, feel the odd one out especially if the others were happy. In my experience a group would not disband simply because one person chose to leave.

It is a healthy sign when one of them wants to lead the others; it can

be used constructively. In fact I encourage it even with the youngest pupils by having each one in turn conduct whilst the others play. One person may do it with a great deal more flair than the others and it allows him to stand out. They have to be able to take the lead because in a sense they need to be individual when they are practising. It is just as bad for children to rely on being part of a group as it is for somebody not being able to fit into a group. Even with young pupils there are times when groups can be left to themselves. It is important for the teacher to recognise when those times occur and not to go on interfering when the children could be finding things out for themselves. If they are studying a new piece they clap the notes in turn; I try to keep out as much as possible, I let them go through it even if they make mistakes although I will intervene later to correct these mistakes.

8. Teacher skills

It is the organisation and pre-planning of the lesson that is different from individual teaching. In this sense if you are a fairly experienced instrumental teacher with an individual coming to you regularly then you do not need to plan too far ahead, though you may well need an overall plan of what that child is to do within six months of learning to play. With one pupil you can, to a certain extent, give a lesson on what that pupil has prepared, what you know from contact with him and what you feel he needs. Piano teachers, particularly, tend to talk too much and their poor captive pupil has to sit there and yawn. You cannot do that with a group; they will want to be doing something and they become restive. Allowing for a certain amount of flexibility you have to keep to your plan though choosing to spend longer on a particular point you may not get through as much as you intended to do.

You have to be able to keep overall control even if you are in the background. You have to be able to see which way a lesson is going and try to anticipate what is to happen next. Also, you need a sense of humour because if a group lesson starts to drag the children will become either disruptive or lose interest.

The question of whether piano teachers are really trained has arisen recently in the EPTA and ISM Journals. I am very much aware that I was not trained to teach and from what I gather many young people feel the same way nowadays. Compared to other countries the training is inadequate and students are not given the chance to give lessons under supervision. We had an EPTA meeting recently and it was agreed that even people who had done the GRSM had not the opportunity to teach young children. What I feel should happen is that during a three or four-year course at the Academy or the College, anyone taking a teaching diploma should be able to observe practising teachers and be allowed to help with group lessons.

9. Development

Group teaching could go beyond the elementary stages though it would depend on the individual groups concerned and the teacher's willingness to proceed. I am happy to let the group continue for as long as the members want but there may be a limited period of time that groups can function - three or four years is normal. Children can hold a part on their own quite quickly but it is a question of material.

10. Learning outcomes

Playing together widens the range of skills. So many individual piano pupils do not have the chance of playing even duets. Ensemble playing is a very neglected field. If they are in a group, ensemble playing comes

naturally. Apart from improving their reading it brings out initiative; one pupil may choose to work out a bass line or tackle the teacher's part. I remember one pupil with a very poor sense of rhythm, he simply could not play in time but by having the other members of the group clap the beat the sheer weight of numbers and volume of sound made him play rhythmically. That sort of problem is more easily corrected in a group as the other children notice and the one who is incorrect has the opportunity of hearing the correct way several times.

Success is judged by whether the pupils want to continue in groups; by the fact that they are enjoying themselves, gaining knowledge, understanding and a love of music. With adults there is a positively therapeutic aspect, it does something personally; socially, it gives them an interest and it extends their knowledge and outlook.

Interim Commentary

Harrogate piano teacher Julia Lee teaches groups both in the private sector and those organised through LEA provision - several of which are at present in jeopardy. Her recently published book,[1] written in the hope that teachers would evolve their own group material from tutors and pieces used in individual lessons, is lucid and workmanlike, though she admits that in the gap between writing the book and its publication several of her ideas have moved on. Like the other interviewees, she is largely a self-taught group teacher, researching group approaches from the professional journals and delving into reports of American group studies. Consequently her approach is eclectic; she openly avows her acknowledgement to Yvonne Enoch, borrowing freely from such diverse sources as Curwen and Bastien. Clearly, she does not believe in starting

afresh with new group material, were it possible to find, but that the known repertoire, with which teachers feel confident and have already achieved considerable success, should be looked at de novo , adapted, or at least used to form the basis of a group approach. That she does this in her own lessons is to be expected; what is surprising is that, rather than feeling that the material is threadbare, it works so well.

She is impressive to observe, at times remaining in the background - which in no way diminishes her own immense contribution - at other times energising the passive members so that they are drawn into rather than, as often happens, made to feel an appendage to the activity. The stimulus, she avers, is the same as going to an orchestra, band or ensemble rehearsal. Her well-rounded musicianship lessons - for they are more than mere piano lessons - make use of dummy keyboards, finger pattern games, silent score reading and aural skills. Interestingly, rather than splitting up the lesson into separate diversionary activities, a feature we have come to expect at some point in a group string lesson, the emphasis is on unified, collective learning. This may well be a distinctive feature of the group piano lesson, possibly as a result of having only one instrument on which real sounds can be made.

The lessons, despite their uncompetitive atmosphere generally, are at times inescapably competitive. A brief extract from a Radio 4 programme (1983) which included a feature on Julia Lee's adult piano groups, may serve to illustrate their atmosphere. One of the students takes up the point:

> I think we get a sense of achievement and satisfaction at being able to play a difficult piece. When we first looked at it we thought we would never tackle it but then we said if Marjory could do it, we'd have a go. You get that from a group; you wouldn't with a private lesson.

[1]Lee, J. Group Piano Lessons : A Practical Guide
Manchester : Forsyth Bros. Ltd. 1981

4.11
Interviewee : Sheila Nelson, group string teacher

1. Antecedents

I became interested in group teaching in about 1952 when I taught my younger brother and his friends together so I have been teaching for some thirty years on and off but not always with groups.

I like teaching groups but in addition to group lessons I continue to give between forty and fifty individual lessons weekly, though each of those individuals attends a group lesson as well - that is in the private sector.

2. Rationale

I cannot define group teaching, it is far too variable. The aims of group teaching are the same as those of any other type of teaching, namely; learning and enjoying learning, in that sense the group can help tremendously. The enjoyment factor is a distinct advantage. In schools it is less conspicuous to be carrying an instrument to school if there are many others carrying instruments. Children are more willing to do movement exercises and to sing, both a necessary part of violin playing, in a group. Against the group system, the disadvantages, it may be difficult to actually hear the individuals - to identify and isolate their particular problems.

3. Organisation

No selection is made in my school teaching - though in the private sector I make up groups of children at various stages and I fill up the vacancies as they become available. The groups are arranged mostly on a social basis, the children need to live nearby so that there is the prospect of them meeting at home to play chamber music together as they grow older; the motivation of being with others is so important. The

nearer they live the more likely they are to be able to learn with me. Also, they have to fit into the group times and be able to attend twice a week. Parental encouragement is desirable.

The length of a group lesson depends on the age of the learner. Half-hour lessons are adequate in the beginning stages increasing up to an hour as they progress. I could go on for much longer than an hour with the eldest pupils if there were the time to spare. They would, I'm sure, be happy to stay for two hours or more playing chamber music. In the early stages group lessons should, if possible, be more than once a week, and at home I teach the pupils once individually and once in a group each week; that I consider ideal.

I keep a rough record of group activities through tapes and videotapes. Also I have a preparation book that contains plans, to which I rarely keep, for the term. A lot of time is spent in preparation but eventually that preparation can be used with several groups.

I think it is possible to involve all pupils at all times. I cater for the varying standards and differing rates of progress by writing the material to suit the child. I teach mixed strings, violins, violas and cellos; I think that the only way to cope with teaching different types of instruments within the same lesson is by learning how to play those instruments - the teachers on my scheme try to do that.

4. Constitution of the group

I do not think that there is an optimum size of group; it depends on how many teachers there are. I have thirty children with five teachers and that works quite nicely. By myself, I prefer about ten to twelve in number though I do go up to sixteen when they are fairly self-reliant and able to work at different problems in the same room. I play the piano

competently and that, I think, is the reason I can cope with so many beginners at once. If I were not a reasonable pianist, I would say that one would need a ratio of two teachers to twelve children. In the early stages of string playing more teachers are necessary especially if one is teaching by physical contact; that I feel is the method that works best.

One of my groups at home ranges in age from eight to fifteen-year-olds. These children mix socially and play well together. This may be due to the rather paternal character of the fifteen-year-old and though there are two fourteen-year-olds with him, the eight-year-old is excessively advanced for her age so none of the others mind playing with her. Normally I prefer groups to be fairly close in age-range so that they are socially compatible; it makes for a cohesive and friendly group.

5. Materials

I use my own books and tutors together with those of Paul Rolland. My materials have evolved over many years but tomorrow I may need to write a new piece or study to solve a specific problem.

6. Methodology

I use musical games when the children need them and I use rote and memory learning quite extensively in the early stages as playing by ear is good for basic intonation. We improvise and we sight read every lesson. It is possible to repeat things more often in a group situation especially if you put it on a slightly different slant each time that you cover the same ground.

7. Social interaction

My groups are not particularly competitive, at least not to my knowledge, unless they enter a competition. Occasionally I use competitiveness in an attempt to stimulate interest; eg. I may ask half

the class to perform whilst the others listen, then I reverse the roles. On the whole they are not competitive.

I think that I am very aware of the individual's contribution to the group even in large classes but also, as senior teacher, I have to be aware of the contribution of my assistant teachers, though I have to say that I tend to notice the children much more than the teachers. As the pupils become older their awareness of each other's contributions increases. I do find that they help one another though at times that help is in danger of becoming dependence; that is solved by putting them into chamber music ensemble. The aim of all my teaching is that the students will develop independence - that is so vital in chamber music.

Discontinuing lessons in the private sector is not a problem; in any case it rarely happens but in the school situation it is a different matter. There you can set up a chain reaction whereby one child wishing to discontinue lessons gives rise to an increasingly popular idea within the class. We have had to work out a number of ways of combating this problem. Early in the scheme we learned to say that if you want to give up playing the violin the only time that we will allow you to discontinue is at the end of term. Usually just prior to the term ending we have something especially nice like a concert so that the pupil's interest increases again. If that pupil is still determined to give up then a gap in the group during the time immediately following the holidays is unlikely to be noticed quite as much by the others continuing lessons.

I think in any group members do take on leader roles though this I see happening more amongst teenagers than primary school children.

8. Teacher skills

Groups have to be taught in a way that keeps them all busy all the

time. There is a very necessary sorting out of activities and skills that can be learned together; that, unfortunately, is not taught to many string teachers in this country. Most of the physical movements of string playing can be taught very effectively and efficiently to groups of almost any size; this has been worked out most beautifully by Paul Rolland. It is a completely different approach and you simply have to acquire it. Remember you are speaking to a group of people so you have necessarily to find ways of involving them all. However, at the same time, you should let the individual be heard but the others must not become bored nor should they stand around shuffling from foot to foot. They have to remain attentive the whole time and one way of retaining that attentiveness is by creating a situation in which they never know what is going to happen next.

Teaching groups requires skills not normally associated with instrumental teachers. A group teacher needs to be fairly extrovert in personality; he needs a compelling way of presenting the subject. I do not know that there is one effective way of learning to teach groups; there are probably several - if you are a string player you would do well to join the Tower Hamlets Project! I would like to see instrumental teachers trained to teach. Of course the 'average' instrumental teacher could become an effective group teacher but by embarking into group teaching without proper training, he is more likely to become a disastrous teacher. The group lesson is very like a general classroom lesson.

9. Development

I take groups beyond the elementary stages but I prefer smaller groups with the more advanced. Two or three advanced pupils together is

fine provided that they have a larger group lesson as well. I would not only have a small group as I think that the combination of the two is valuable. I like them to have both individual and group lessons from about grade IV standard.

In my experience group-taught pupils should be able to cope with independent parts fairly early. Usually they should be able to hold a part on their own round about grade I standard.

10. Learning outcomes

You are actually widening the range of skills by teaching reading, which can apply to word and book reading; you are teaching them to sing whilst following a melodic line across the page, so that they are learning to follow from left to right; and you are teaching them to convert symbols into activity. Incidentally, I have five pupils who all read music and as yet they have not begun to read words. I shouldn't think that they will have any problems reading words when the time comes; on the contrary, I feel that they will become quick readers and this is one reason why I like to teach six rather than seven-year-olds. From the teacher's viewpoint the quicker progress of the seven-year-old child, who has already learnt to read, is more rewarding than teaching six-year-olds who, though taking a long time to progress, are often far more physically flexible probably because they have had to take the early stages slowly.

My private pupils play regularly in orchestras and ensembles. With the exception of a few, my school pupils are hardly ready to join orchestras, but as soon as they are able they will play in some sort of ensemble. A summer course produced six quartets and an orchestra: I had to write the material.

I have yet to learn how to instil regular practice in my pupils,

though every lesson I show them how to practise. With my thirteen and fourteen-year-olds, the second highest group, I have recently managed to cajole them to tape record their practice sessions over a period of a week. What they think is practising the Mendelssohn Concerto in E minor, or Rondo Capriccio by Saint-Saëns, has to be heard to be believed. Sound habits of practising are only taught by being there and making them correct constantly. Practising is the hardest thing to teach. Rhythm, however, I have never found difficult to teach and I think that the group situation helps that aspect of playing.

Success? I don't estimate success in group teaching, you can't do, it is far too difficult.

Interim commentary

Present financial restraints have brought with them uncertain futures and the Tower Hamlets Scheme represents a bold initiative in a time of recession. Undoubtedly the best known instrumental scheme in the country, it represents one authority's commitment to group teaching. Sheila Nelson and her assistants team-teach whole classes of string players, at times splitting the classes into smaller groups to deal with specific problems and looked over by one of the staff. The role of the assistants within the large groups is very much one of leading from behind. They weave in between the rows of music stands correcting fingering, checking stance or simply offering encouragement. Team leaders and assistants come together at the end of the day to iron out teaching problems and to monitor the materials.

In interview Sheila Nelson's comments were terse yet to the point: on reflection the interview technique did not seem to do her justice, she

rests uneasily in the interviewee's chair. What is particularly striking from observation of Sheila Nelson's approach, and one can deduce from the interview nevertheless, is her thorough preparation and attention to detail. She is, of course, active as a writer of materials for group string lessons but more than that the qualities and industriousness she demands of her staff; the necessary sorting out of activities which can be learned together; having a compelling way of presenting the subject matter; retaining attentiveness by creating an atmosphere of anticipation, are ever present in her own lessons. These facts, self-evident though they may appear, coupled with energy and enthusiasm, point the way to the success of the scheme.

4.12
Interviewee : Jane Pamment group string teacher

1. Antecedents

I became interested in the group approach largely through experiencing some very bad group teaching. I was convinced that it could be better organised, paradoxically, with more help for the individual. This, together with finding that children teach each other so much better than the teacher, provided that the lessons are structured, was the root of it. I have been group teaching now for about ten years. Before that, although I taught individually, I always hoped that the children would work together and I organised quartets and ensemble work as a follow up to the lessons. After all ensemble work is the foundation of musicianship. Today I continue to give individual tuition in addition to group lessons.

2. Rationale

The definition breaks down into two parts: a specific group comprising children of the same technical level working together at a specific piece; and a group of beginners learning the basic techniques together. The problems of each type of group are quite separate, and need to be carefully thought about. Group teaching is not merely a huge group of children working together, come what may, though occasionally that could be the case; it is a question of careful preparation. The sort of group teaching to which I referred earlier was rigid, and just killed music; there were twelve to fifteen at a time regardless of talent, the instruments were not tuned properly, and the really musical children were screaming to stop lessons because they could not bear the noise going on all around them.

The aims are psychological: children are always stimulated when they

see and hear their own peers; they are so good with each other and good for each other. As I have said group teaching is a paradox; you must be careful to see that each child receives individual attention some time during the week. Young children especially will always want to show you what they can do. You have to answer that cry, even if you can spare only a few moments to say "yes, that's going along fine". After that they go back into the group quite happily. There must always be a chance for the individual to develop.

3. Organisation

I work with very small children, four and five-year olds. I go into their ordinary classroom situation so they become used to seeing me about the school and I select usually on a singing and co-ordinational basis, although I take remedial groups of children who have problems of co-ordination. Most children want the opportunity of learning to play a musical instrument, but there are some with the tenacity to come bothering me week after week so I try to slot them in somewhere. Those children often make quick progress because they have had to fight to start and have had to sort out what they really want to do.

Parental support in the early stages of learning to play a string instrument is absolutely necessary. You are soon able to sort out those who are playing only because their parents want them to play. Nevertheless you need parental help with practice. I encourage parents to come to watch and learn alongside wherever possible. It is an enormous help when parents are wrestling with the same problems.

The length of the lesson should be in direct relation to the age of the children. I ensure that the lessons are varied, that there is some singing, reading and memory work. With small children, short lessons

are preferable. When you sense that they are tiring you change the activity. In school I take half hour lessons but within that time I may well change the activity several times. You have to be aware of the mood of the group; you cannot be rigid. If you do not work with the group you will hardly achieve anything and whilst you have to go in with a definite plan you must not be afraid to change to something else if it is not working out.

The ideal set-up at almost any age would be to have a weekly group lesson followed by a back-up individual lesson. Failing that, lessons twice a week are invaluable especially in areas where parents are not particularly involved.

I try to involve all pupils at all times in the large group lesson. I adapt the material so that each person is doing something even if he is playing only an open string part. It is essential to involve everyone; my five year olds have a tremendous sense of achievement from plucking open strings in, say, Greensleeves. The experience of working together, of concentration, of movement and metre is paramount.

4. Constitution of the group

I do not like working with more than eight small children at a time. In the back-up, small group lesson it is space that is a problem. In a half hour lesson I usually try to take six; this allows for tuning as it is essential that the instruments are accurately tuned. With six I do not feel swamped and the children have time to play to each other.

Some of my junior school groups range from five to ten-year-olds. For the rest, groups comprise students of a similar standard and talent though some adolescents are adamant against working with younger children; it is better to keep them within their peer group.

5. Materials

It takes a lot of time to prepare adequately, I am sure every group teacher says the same. There is no one method that does it all. Even if you were to find one, then a few years later you would want to explore new material.

Trevor Widdicombe's Forty Folk Tunes for the Violin (Curwen) are lovely on both violin and cello. I use Sheila Nelson's books (Boosey & Hawkes), Eta Cohen's First-Year Violin Method (Paxton), and the Paul Rolland publications, but once a group can manage Forty Folk Tunes I move on to classical and romantic albums. I generally find albums are better than tutors because children in the groups hear a wider variety of pieces and if they hear something they like it spurs them on. Similarly if you say "don't do Kreutzer study No.10 because it is too difficult," almost inevitably someone will come back the following week able to play it. Of course that is exactly what you wanted. My whole idea about teaching is to develop the whole person. They have to be independent of you and you must draw out what is in them.

6. Methodology

Musical games are very much a part of the approach especially with the younger pupils. They love physical action and anything that can be made into a game is more interesting to them. It is not, however, just the fun and games of the playground. Children do take the violin very seriously; they like to think of it as a serious instrument. There is a discipline within it but games can sweeten some of the slightly bitter pills of learning.

Rote and memory learning are useful provided that they are used in conjunction with reading. I do insist on them reading - once they have

learned basic technique and posture - in spite of all the singing and memory work they do. Ideally children should have a basic course of Kodály and note and rhythmic reading before coping with violin technique. I always teach basic theory away from the instrument as people cannot cope with reading skills and the physical skills needed at the same time in the early stages. I suffered so much by not being made to read music. I would memorise everything and the dots in front of me meant little. Similarly, fingering was written in for me and I had quite a struggle getting over that. I never write in fingering for my pupils and I make them read something new every lesson.

I do a tremendous amount of singing at all levels and I work with rounds, first singing and then playing them. You choose a round for the technical problem that you are trying to hammer home. It works splendidly and you really need not mention the problem for if they can sing the round they have it in their heads.

7. Social interaction

I try to veer toward co-operation rather than competition but there are times when competition plays an important part. They all learn to criticise and to be criticised, this is a crucial element of group work, but I always conclude with a kind résumé. They must never become discouraged, you cannot destroy a child's will to learn just because he has tremendous physical or learning difficulties.

I am very aware of the individuals in the group. Some of them with difficult psychological backgrounds have had to learn to work with a group. Everyone has to have a turn and as I have already said, paradoxically, group work meets the needs of the individual.

Usually with children you can sense someone losing interest. I hate

children being made to play if they really dislike it, but they can drop out for a number of reasons. If they are genuinely bored and the signs have been there for some time, it is usually because their parents wanted them to play and they did not. One advantage of having parents into the lessons in the early stages is that they can see if there is a lack of concentration and general interest. They may realise that their child has started too young and perhaps needs another year or so for co-ordination to improve. Invariably I tell those children to come back later if they want to, and usually we part on good terms.

8. Teacher skills

A group teaching approach as opposed to an individual one differs in time scale. With an individual pupil present for a whole hour you watch for problems then correct them. Group work is a question of comparison, imitation and emulation; of using the time in ensemble. It is a different ball game altogether. It takes for a certain tolerance and humour. Watching and listening to someone else teach a group would be the best way of acquiring the skills. Also you must listen to what children tell you, I cannot overstress this. I learnt so many things by watching children in the playground, watching their physical actions; how they relate, and above all by listening to them converse.

Inevitably there will be a swing in music education, brought on partly by our present economy, toward training students to teach groups. Additionally, there ought to be time for teachers to keep their own playing at a high level. The idea that because you are learning to teach you need not be a particularly good player is, I feel, mistaken. Children are very aware of the quality of sound and they are hardly going to be encouraged by a teacher less than proficient. At junior school

level you have to acquire similar skills to the childrens' class teachers. You have to change activities and involve the children the whole time.

9. Development

Surely group teaching can go beyond the elementary level. After all, is not the master class a high-flown form of group lesson? Groups are beneficial at any level provided that the individuals involved are ready for them. You can call it what you like but group teaching is a diverse body of individuals coming together to work and solve certain specific problems. You have to ensure that the individuals have the necessary technical and musical encouragement, then they are able to contribute more to the group.

I do not think that I would advise students to take individual lessons in place of group lessons at any stage provided there is a back-up lesson. Ideally a course should be structured so that there are both group and one-to-one lessons throughout. It is essential for musicians to learn to play together. Moreover if a person really wants to play an instrument, or do anything well, it is stimulating to be with people who are like-minded.

10. Learning outcomes

The children's repertoire is widened by listening to the others in the group. When they hear something they like, it stimulates them to go and work that piece out for themselves. For the teacher this often means that you are able to move on to another problem as the children have dealt successfully with that one. This same principle applies across the board whether the pupils are four or forty-four.

I find that many of the children in my violin groups also learn recorder, are good percussionists and are in almost everything else that

the school offers. Some of the school teachers have said that since their pupils have learnt to read music in my violin groups their reading, book learning and concentration have improved. That is why I take a group of remedials. The very fact of having to concentrate proves beneficial I am sure in other areas.

Naturally children must practise regularly and really listen to themselves. It is a very old fashioned idea but I give out practice books. That makes certain that the parents know what is going on and it ensures that they do their bit. Children become quite cross if you forget to look at their practice books. They like the security of the parent knowing that they are actually working; it is a good old-fashioned standby.

In this day and age children are into ensembles and school orchestras almost as soon as they can hold the instruments. Group-taught children seem much more rhythmically aware and therefore are able to cope. I hear a lot of piano playing that is very unrhythmical and singers too are inclined to wander without a strong rhythmic accompaniment. The rhythmic discipline required in rounds or two or three part harmony is quite considerable; separate moving parts must help.

Success is when the children come rushing up to you from the playground exclaiming with delight that it is their lesson today. Enough?

Interim commentary

Jane Pamment, a freelance violinist and group string teacher, plays mainly with the English Chamber Orchestra. Aside from her professional career until recently she taught groups of string players at Pimlico

school and now teaches in Kent.

The marked impression left by the lacunae in her own music education provided the determination to increase the fineness of the netting for her own pupils by structuring and better organising group teaching. Here is someone who does not conform to the aphorism 'as ye learn so shall ye teach.' Jane Pamment teaches in the way in which she does not so much as a consequence of her own training rather in defiance of it.

Her contention about 'teaching developing the whole person' and her concern for remedial, unco-ordinated children are symptomatic of her approach, the essentials of which are economically illumined: 'comparison, imitation and emulation; of using the time in ensemble.'

She would appear to accord with Graham Owen when she says, 'you cannot be too rigid', and like Phyllis Palmer (cf. interview 4.14) her 'definite plan' for a given lesson often turns out to be a point of departure.

In defining group teaching she points much the same distinction as Kenneth van Barthold - a group working towards a specific piece, a group of beginners learning the basics - but towards the end of the interview, almost as an afterthought, she enlarges the definition: 'group teaching is a diverse body of individuals coming together to work and solve certain specific problems.' Further qualified by the words 'in a musical setting', it is a definition with which few would demur.

4.13
Interviewee : Kenneth McAllister, freelance clarinettist and teacher on the special music course at Pimlico School.

1. Antecedents

I teach groups of mixed wind instrumentalists as opposed to groups of clarinettists. The numbers of clarinettists are not large so group clarinet lessons are simply not necessary. Pimlico special music course opened in September 1970 although we did not actually start group work until 1971 as the whole venture was brand new; in fact we did not have a head of department until January of that year. I think I am the only remaining original member of the music department. I am employed in part-time capacity to teach clarinet, to take mixed ensembles and to conduct the wind band. On Saturdays I am involved in the ILEA Centre for Young Musicians; we use the same premises and the entire school is taken over with instrumental teaching and ensemble coaching.

2. Rationale

The aim is to give children who are potentially gifted, though from 'average' backgrounds, a chance of a thorough musical education and to further their practical abilities on the instruments. That is basically how I see it.

The advantage of the scheme is in the opportunity it affords. There are, I am sure, plenty of gifted children in other London schools who are not able to develop sufficiently as ensemble players. That is so important; when you go into the profession you realise that apart from the obvious ability to play your instrument well, you must be able to play with others. Here, on the special music course, they have the advantage of a great deal of ensemble experience through which they are taught to

listen to one another. Children in other schools will play with orchestras and bands but as time is in short supply rehearsals rarely go beyond actually learning the notes so the result is poor ensemble. We try to give them a complete ensemble training.

3. Organisation

The pupils are selected for me; I do not attend the auditions. The Senior Wind Adviser for ILEA together with the head of department are responsible for the selection of pupils.

I think parental support absolutely necessary and generally one finds the parents are heavily involved.

As it is a special music course integrated into normal school work the children receive much more time in music instruction than they would in the average comprehensive. In addition to the hour-long individual lessons there are timetabled ensemble lessons.

We have progress charts and we keep folios detailing the materials we cover. The children have music notebooks in which we write down what they are to practise for the following week's lesson, as well as subsidiary exercises (that is brass instruments).

Though I cannot play all the instruments I take in ensemble I find that I am able to give advice at the time, whether it is an alternative fingering for a trill or whatever, though with a difficult problem - perhaps an obscure bassoon fingering - my colleagues are usually fairly close at hand so they can help out.

4. Constitution of the group

You find the first, second and third years playing together in the smaller ensembles; we tend to have junior and senior sides of the school with a half way mark just after the third year. In wind band, however,

the age range extends from first years to sixth formers. Difficulties arise, however, as several of the first years are mediocre in their techniques and in a few cases only elementary so initially they have quite a struggle; nevertheless, I like to involve them even if they can play only some of the parts.

5. Materials

We have quite a large library of ensemble music that we have built up over the years. Mixed Bag (Chester) are useful - for junior players for example - and I am pleased this kind of music is now marketed. I would like it to be made known that this type of publication should be readily available for school wind groups. With our twenty-five wind players we split them up into mixed quartets, quintets and so on, depending on the different types of instrumentalists available at that time. Several of the parts will necessarily have to be substituted due to absence or a lack of ability in certain key players and until recently there has not been enough mixed repertoire of the type which can be used in a flexible way.

I have supplemented the material by writing my own pieces and arrangements but being a freelance player I have very little time; writing is something I plan to do in my old age!

6. Methodology

To take a complete group of clarinettists would make life much easier but I do not agree with that type of massed group teaching. I have found certain inadequacies in pupils due to teachers not taking sufficient care over the formation of the embouchure; they have had them playing and fingering without attending properly to their mouths and to the way that they breathe. I remember one clarinet pupil whose embouchure was particularly poor due to being taught by an oboist.

7. Social interaction

There is a degree of competition and inevitably jealously comes with it; one has to make certain that it does not get out of hand. With any teacher involved with a group there must be a sense of responsibility and control yet at the same time the respect of the group is vital. I have respect for them and in turn I expect their respect. You need firm control together with patience and understanding. If they start to become nervous in your company it will come out in their playing.

8. Teacher skills

I am first and foremost a performer though I have a teaching, in addition to a performers, diploma but I did not attend teacher training college. As it happened I had to learn to teach by actually doing it. The personality of a teacher is vital; if you have an unfortunate manner pupils take umbrage and will not play well; not that they decide deliberately to play badly, but because you are not giving anything of yourself a barrier is set up. I am not implying that teachers are born and not made; we can all be moulded and changed in certain respects but if you are to impart information to a group you must have the information in the first place.

The skills required are comparable to those of a class teacher. It is allied to what I said above: if you know your subject if you have the confidence to impart it with the right attitudes and personality, then you will not go far wrong.

9. Development

There are problems from time to time with grouping certain players together: for instance, presently we have only one really competent French horn player, as she happens to be in the upper sixth, her time for

rehearsal within school time is very limited. To maintain the standard that we achieve at Pimlico means ensuring that rehearsal time is maximised; in the French horn player's case outside of normal school hours; we could not possibly have a sudden surge one week before a concert.

10. Learning outcomes

I was saying earlier that we try to teach them to listen but often in a junior ensemble they listen to the extent of losing concentration on their own line of music and as a result they cannot play together - it's a paradox.

Ensemble playing makes you appreciate that you have to play with a good sound adaptable to any dynamic or shade of nuance, and sensitive to a variety of styles.

You have to be guided by intuition. Each child represents his own set of problems. You work to a general pattern of tutors; books, pieces and examinations if necessary - though I would not judge success by examination passes, that is a side issue. Sometimes if players develop slowly they may need the incentive of an examination but there are other incentives. There are recitals periodically, places to be won in the orchestra and other goals. Underpinning these is a need to work consistently hard to a pattern - that is success.

Interim commentary

Rather than teaching his clarinet students en bloc, Kenneth McAllister takes each one in turn for a weekly hour-long lesson. He looks askance at teaching massed like-instrument groups but, in all fairness, the inadequacies he has found in students taught in that way were not so much

a result of the group situation but more a factor of being taught by a teacher of a different instrument. That hoary chestnut regarding embouchure has been and will continue to be put about by woodwind and brass players alike. Whether individual lessons result in better-formed embouchures is an issue open to question. More significant is the time and attention given to embouchure formation. That such time and attention is more easily found in one-to-one lessons is, perhaps, fair comment but that hardly constitutes a valid reason per se for wind and brass instruments to continually be taught individually. Should some measure of individual attention be required to 'set' embouchures, as it were, then such time can surely be put aside at the commencement of a course of lessons.

Nevertheless Kenneth McAllister prefers his clarinettists - who are by and large experienced players - to gain group experience from playing in mixed wind ensembles and to that end Pimlico timetable ensemble lessons into the curriculum of the special music course. That such provision is made is testimony both of the school's commitment to ensemble experience and of the value it places on that experience. What is offered at Pimlico is a complete ensemble training with the necessary regular time allocated to it. Small wonder then, in comparison, schools where rehearsal time is kept outside of the 'official' school day, the students rarely go beyond learning the notes. Alas, a week of fraught rehearsals prior to performance is as much as some can manage.

The main advantage Kenneth McAllister sees of the special music course, is that it brings together students from 'average backgrounds' who - in their former schools - would have had little opportunity of playing music with instrumentalists of similar standard. Whether that

is seen as being élitist is a moot point. It is worth remembering, however, that apart from their music lessons, the special music course students are integrated into the normal school timetable - they attend the same lessons as everyone else. Also, Kenneth McAllister's views reflect his experience both as a London freelance, and as a teacher of potential professional musicians. Seen in that light his views are hardly radical. He admits to being 'first and foremost' a performer and clearly he is no less of a teacher for that. Once again we should doubt what is often taken as a classic dichotomy: whether we want teachers who can play their instruments or who know how to teach? Of course the apparent distinction is quite false as several of the interviewees - combining both roles with equal success - have shown.

Coaching students in ensemble does, however, bring its own problems: The teacher has to be well-versed in all the instruments present, whether woodwind or brass, although at this level basic problems of fingering, transposition and of reading clefs are an infrequent occurrence. Moreover, what is being taught, or more accurately brought out, are qualities of musicianship. In some ways coaching an ensemble of mixed instruments parallels writing educational music: the more elementary the standard of players, the greater the need for the composer to have a detailed working knowledge of the instruments involved. Experienced players can after all cope with parts that lie uneasily under the hand, beginners cannot.

Hitherto the teacher had the onerous task of transcribing or arranging much of the music to suit the instrumentalists he had available. Only now are publishing houses realising the sales potential of freely arranged, adaptable music; one publisher it would seem is successfuly

cornering the market in repertoire for mixed wind groups.

There is a further reason unconnected to the other two, why ensemble work can be problematic in schools. With a small ensemble a full complement is a prerequisite, as the example of the French horn student showed. It follows then, that in some large schools where players might well be drawn from a variety of year groups, the logistics, of gathering together all the members of the ensemble at one time, are not inconsiderable.

To conclude, what Kenneth McAllister has in common with the other interviewees is the development of individual potentialities through group - in his case ensemble - experience. There is, after all, little point in learning to play instruments that are essentially suited to ensemble playing if use cannot be made of them within that setting. Manifestly, his view of success - ie., 'to work consistently hard to a pattern' - is more relative and ongoing than has so far been mentioned.

4.14
Interviewee : Phyllis Palmer, pianist

1. Antecedents

When I first heard of a piano teacher taking groups it was with electronic keyboards and I simply could not reconcile the sound. I consider that all the piano teaching I do is directed towards sound so I knew that I could not teach using a piano lab. technique. My interest in groups, using conventional pianos grew out of my 'Yardsticks' scheme, from seeing how people responded to a group situation and from discovering, something I simply had not believed before; that in a less intense situation from the usual one-to-one, people, especially beginners would come out of themselves, be willing to help one another and readily console when necessary. So 'Yardsticks' and my group teaching evolved together. 'Yardsticks' was a long time in embryo, being thought up and worked out, we had our first meeting in November and my group lessons commenced in the following January.

For years I worried about private teachers because of the fact that they seldom have any form of contact with other teachers. They are, on the whole, divided into two groups: those who like myself are constantly talking to others about their teaching, and those who rarely discuss their teaching with anyone. The latter can come to feel isolated; piano teachers do not have staffrooms nor any form of in-service training and weekend courses are sometimes expensive and it is difficult for some to arrange to be away from home for that long.

Without intending to be derogatory I sometimes wonder whether some teachers have any form of measurement or yardsticks by which to judge their teaching or know what they are trying to do, what they think is important when they are teaching, why they are doing it. To a degree we

all enjoy isolation but from time to time there is a need to discuss what we do with other people.

2. Rationale

In the group situation, teaching adults who already play the piano, I try to give them a chance to combine the great pleasure of a shared activity with tuition. Also, in the early stages group lessons were a way of building up my teaching practice again.

I think the group situation is less pressurised in one sense because the individuals are not having the teacher's full attention all the time, yet in another sense the pressure is increased as they have necessarily to be performers from the outset. I am, I know, considered a high-powered teacher, full of ideas, with a tendency sometimes to overwhelm my pupils. The group situation of constant change can help that; the pupils discover that others have just the same difficulties and that is comforting. It also means that you have lost one of the great fallbacks of an individual lesson where it is easy for them to claim that something is "too difficult"; that, they can hardly do when there are eight other people present who find it just as demanding - everyone is in the same boat. Adults can use a great deal of time telling you of their problems, which can be very good for them, but sometimes delays playing progress.

3. Organisation

Only twice have I refused to take on pupils and on both those occasions the reasons were purely practical. I will not teach someone unless they have a piano on which to practise, that may sound absurd but some will take lessons with the intention of practising only when they go home for weekends. I cannot teach more than eight at any one time so I have a waiting list - that I suppose one might take as being selective.

'Officially' my group lessons are two hours in length, I say officially as they will often extend to two and a half hours, sometimes even three. Remember, my pupils are adults and we break for coffee after an hour. The lessons are fortnightly. I think weekly would be too often for many of them, who work full-time and need the two weeks of preparation in between meetings.

I keep a track of everything I do and I have in my mind long-term plans of what I should be doing in the way of pieces and technique but a degree of my teaching is 'off the cuff'. I work on the assumption that I have a set pattern from which I continuously depart yet which I can, if necessary, fall back on. It is a question of diverging en route as things arise.

I try to ensure that everyone plays for the same length of time and, although I am fairly fierce with anyone who attempts to gossip, when someone else is playing, I try to involve them all by discussion and constructive criticism free from value judgements.

The standards are really not that variable. I have three groups: advanced, those capable of playing, for instance, a movement of a Mozart concerto; intermediate, including some musically advanced performers of other instruments who have great musical perception but are approximately grade V standard pianists; and beginners, two of whom are absolute beginners, two more have been playing some six months and the remaining two, who as children took piano lessons, have now restarted after many years of not playing. Some of my group students have individual piano lessons with other teachers and provided that this has been pre-arranged and agreed - between pupil and both teachers - all is well. In fact, with me they tend to play much simpler pieces than they do with their own

teachers. I have found what they need is consolidation and confidence so they learn to play easy pieces beautifully and in ensemble.

4. Constitution of the group

Six is usual in my group though I have one group of seven and I would regard eight as the optimum number. The standard of the group would not necessarily influence the size of the group; it is the people that decide the size not their standard. With eight there are enough players to play two pianos, eight hands, whilst four listen and then they change round.

5. Materials

I do not use anything particularly special, I rarely write my own material except for exercises; each of my pupils has a manuscript book. I have quantities of two-piano pieces and duets which I find useful. My pupils tend not to learn the same pieces. I think that a distinct disadvantage of the electronic piano lab. is that you all play the same pieces. I like to choose all the pieces from one composer at a time so that the members of the group come to know something of style; tonight it happens to be Grieg.

There are some whom I have to hold back; inevitably, not everyone is capable of playing a whole Beethoven Sonata but all can play a piece by him. Also, I try and mix the styles; presently, I want them to play some turn of the century French and some really contemporary piano music.

Apart from the ISM article on 'Yardsticks' as yet I have not gone into print anywhere else; now we have completed the pilot study of 'Yardsticks' perhaps I or one of my colleagues at the eight other centres will write a follow-up.

6. Methodology

As I do not teach children, musical games are of little use. I do,

however, spend a lot of time in physical aspects: breathing exercises; warming-up; exercising the back, hands and fingers away from the keyboard. I try to make my pupils bodily aware. It is not a natural position for anyone to sit for hours and hours at the piano, so one has to have a way of maintaining this in a comfortable and balanced way. They must look right and feel right.

Occasionally, rote and memory learning are useful, with several pianos available groups can find this great fun. People teach improvisation to children in groups so I suppose I could though, as yet, I have not attempted to. Again, sight singing tends to be an occasional rather than frequent activity.

7. Social interaction

I feel that there is no place for the competitive element in adult group teaching in which age, capability, talent, time to practise may all be very variable. It is for this reason that I usually prefer students not to play the same solos. I try to choose for them pieces which I think will suit them, attract them and allow them to do their best. This is after all a very different situation from a competition or festival or exam. Sometimes by coincidence two people choose for themselves the same work, then comparison can be healthy and useful, but it can make the less capable downcast at a time when things seemed to be going well. I have to remember that this is not a course for professional executants, but participatory music.

On the whole they co-operate well and this is interesting: I have never had any trouble in my groups; by that I mean no one has been nasty or élitist towards anyone else and I put this down to music. Strangely enough with my groups of teachers, 'Yardsticks', there are sometimes

troublesome times. Perhaps playing alleviates the tension? I know I continually drag the two types of groups together but the parallels are especially germane. Also, in 'Yardsticks' there is a substantial competitive element, some will even compare numbers of pupils, possibly because they feel threatened. The adults in my piano group do not have their professional status at risk; they have non-musical careers, or are retired, whereas in 'Yardsticks' professional status is felt to be on the line. As chairman you have to tread carefully.

I am very aware of the individual's contribution to the group and to ensure that the others are listening, I make them discuss performances. Anyone who has chosen to perform in front of others wants to do it however much he may be frightened as well. Inevitably, just prior to and immediately after playing their piece, they are inattentive.

Within the rather narrow standard set within a group I try to make certain that the advanced play with the less advanced. Sometimes I separate them by giving the advanced a chance of playing together, then the others will play to each other so that there are opportunities of working at a variety of levels. I have noticed that there are one or two people whomyou have to be careful of placing together as they bring out the worst in each other. Barriers will create barriers: timid ones will create timid ones. Last week I accidentally put two together who really should have been paired with others; the result was that their playing became faster and faster as they tried to outdo one another.

8. Teacher skills

The teaching approaches differ in detail and in concentration. If you are teaching one-to-one,that pupil has your whole attention for an hour. I think any teacher could learn to handle groups, but some fight

shy probably because it is a relatively new concept - I never thought that I would be teaching groups. I believe that the playing of instruments at whatever level is vitally important, it is far preferable to merely buying records, and the more people we can involve the better.

Throughout my experience I have been fascinated by the supportive nature of people, that has been a deciding factor in turning to group work. Some of the things I should like to see in the training of instrumental teachers are actually coming to pass. I would like to see more emphasis on observation of experienced teachers and, in turn, for the student teachers themselves to be observed. The teaching diplomas which are given as a result of one examination, seem to me to be inadequate.

Perhaps the most obvious attribute for any teacher of music is that you should love the subject, love playing your particular instrument and that you can play, or have played, your instrument to a high level. Whilst it is possible to teach piano if you have once played well when you are an arthritic ninety-four year old, I think it is impossible to teach effectively without having known what it is like to be a good player. It is important to be sure when teaching the very young that from the outset their muscular development is unimpaired so that should they wish to become concert pianists the opportunity is there. Similarly it is vital that people should be taught to listen.

9. Development

Naturally my adult groups go beyond the elementary stages but with some of the more advanced there comes a time when they wish to take individual lessons in addition to their fortnightly group lesson. If two of my pupils, heavily committed business people, were to come to me

for individual lessons they would be hard pressed to do enough work to justify an hour of my attention time; it is far better that they come to class - and perhaps that motivates them to practise.

10. Learning outcomes

They should become musicians rather than pianists; that is most important.

I really have no means of assessing whether group-taught students are more rhythmically sensitive than students taught individually as many of my pupils have both types of tuition. I should be interested to know, for I have one very gifted child who is already very advanced, but rhythmically he can occasionally go completely off the rails - that is something for which I cannot account, and wonder if group work might help.

Success can be measured in many ways, in the happiness of the group, in a growing sense of freedom at the keyboard, in a heightened sensitivity to sound, musical line and phrasing.

Interim commentary

Phyllis Palmer, pianist and piano teacher, lives and works in Cambridge. Her studio houses three grand pianos - grouped into a triangular pattern so that the performers can face one another - and this allows for six students, four hands at each instrument, to play comfortably. Despite doublings, like Robert Spencer's multiples of guitarists playing in two parts, the result is a distinct sense of ensemble. Added to this the enjoyment and encouragement her students, all adults, seem to gain and the 'club', as she prefers to call her group lessons, is a patent success, the key of which is the 'great pleasure of a shared activity'.

She flits around from vantage-point to vantage-point, keeping time by large exaggerated movements or settling the pulse more firmly by clapping alongside. Like Kenneth van Barthold, she prefers students not to learn the same music but instead she chooses to draw from one composer at a time so ensuring that each of the group comes to know a collection of related pieces. As with Sheila Nelson, she emphasises the physical aspects of playing, the only difference being that whereas Tower Hamlets' primary school children are taught games, Phyllis Palmer's mature students are given motor exercises. The aims, to make them 'bodily aware and natural' players, are the same in both instances.

After years of teaching undergraduates, several of her alumni have since become renowned musicians, a policy decision meant that she could no longer rely on the University for regular employ. Almost overnight alternative ways of providing a livelihood had to be sought. As so often happens in times of financial hardship, the emphasis turned from relying on others to relying on oneself. Although Phyllis Palmer had always taught privately, in addition to her University commitments, this side of her work had now to be increased with considerable alacrity. Thus, group lessons were a way of building up the practice quickly, a point she made overt. And so, as with many of the other interviewees, turning to group work was more by accident than by design. Whatever the financial circumstances at the time, her 'Yardsticks' scheme whereby groups of piano teachers met regularly to discuss their aims and teaching strategies, an arrangement designed to combat some of the isolation in which they found themselves, was already underway. It was from these early meetings that the need to talk with others was realised and that the interest generally in group work evolved. Subsequently, the two, 'Yardsticks'

and 'club', grew in tandem, one influencing the other and currently there are eight centres piloting the 'Yardsticks' scheme. Before leaving for the present the subject of 'Yardsticks' - possibly the most salient aspect of the interview - an observation on Phyllis Palmer's part is significant: whilst there are often tense, competitive moments in the meetings, such feelings, she claims, rarely arise within the context of group lessons. It is strange how as a profession we feel that we can so easily lose face in front of our colleagues. One wonders to what extent when music teachers converge en masse to discuss common problems, complete honesty is even glimpsed, whether the barriers we build are ever lowered sufficiently to allow input from others practising the same profession albeit from different angles. For some the meetings give an opportunity to vent personal hobbyhorses; for the more defensive, the temptation is either to adopt an attitude of uncritical sycophancy or clam up completely for fear that others will scorn their modus operandi. This, the nub of the matter, is fudged. What is needed are frank, open discussions, the interlocutors staying receptive without being gulled and willing to offer constructive criticism and absorb corrective advice. The importance of regular contact with one's colleagues cannot be gainsaid. 'Yardsticks' has already gone some way to removing the isolation of the private teacher, but whether meaningful, real dialogue can take place remains to be seen.

Chapter Five

Interpretation

In the following interpretation the transcripts of the interviewees have been dealt with collectively as it was felt that to take each one separately would lead to a lack of clarity and concision.

The point made earlier of the interviewees underplaying their own roles became increasingly familiar as more interviews were carried out. One wonders to what extent this, as suggested, is a drawback of the interview technique itself or a measure of the ability of the writer to cope as an interlocutor. Experienced interviewees would sometimes deflect questions regarding their own role with some panache. One had either to infer the answer from what was said during the course of the interview or persist with the question and hope for a serious reply.

It seems almost a truism to say that practically all the renowned group teachers came to group teaching by chance; how else, when in this country there has been little opportunity in the way of courses for group teachers. Notably, those courses organised by the RMSA have had lasting effect on several of the interviewees but on the whole once having realised, perhaps accidentally, the potential of group activity, most of them sought out other experienced group teachers, irrespective of the type of instrument being taught, to observe, then apply what was common to their own instrument and situation. This willingness to learn from others is significant when one considers the solitude of certain teachers - a point constantly reiterated by the pianists. Regular contact, such as the 'yardsticks' scheme affords (PP) whereby under the aegis of a national body local groups of teachers meet to discuss their teaching practices, is vital if instrumental teaching is to advance to a significant degree.

In many cases a change to group work came about gradually, having

formerly taught individually perhaps with regular follow-up ensemble lessons, or through the boredom of teaching beginners in a one-to-one situation realising that group lessons could be stimulating and musical from the outset. Another came to group work after experiencing bad group teaching in an attempt to improve the lot of the students she had observed. By structuring the lessons to a greater extent than had hitherto been the case, she discovered that in such a situation students could teach each other. Further decisive factors in turning to group work ranged from the informality of the group situation and the supportive nature of a group, to the advantages of teaching composition in groups.

Apart from their group work many continue to teach individually though they insist on teaching beginners in groups.

Whilst there were palpable differences in emphasis, definitions of group teaching did not vary to the extent anticipated. Significantly, perhaps, the most eminent group string teacher could not arrive at a definition as she claimed that the activity was too variable. Such a stance, adopted by someone who by her actions has defined the activity in quite precise terms, so much so that she is regarded as almost the definitive group string teacher, is unassailable.

The distinction was made between the master class situation - teaching one person at a time with others listening in - and a group of beginners learning the basics together. Moreover, the term group teaching was felt to have a rather circumscribed connotation, the boundaries were much wider than first appeared. There was said to be some confusion in the minds of many people between group teaching as being an economic necessity, and group teaching as a preferred way of learning. Whilst economic motives must be acknowledged, group teaching

should be defined not as a group brought together for reasons of economy of time and money, but as a diverse body of individuals coming together in a musical setting to work and solve specific problems by interaction - the key word at whatever level of tuition.

The aims were manifold, from the ultimate to the specific, viz: to combine the pleasure of a shared activity with tuition; to help each individual discover his own abilities; to develop the whole person through contact with others; to provide the opportunity of learning for more people; to produce as high a standard of playing as possible; and parity with the standards achieved in individual lessons. Several of the aims cited could apply to almost any other form of education, but especially applicable to group tuition would seem to be the psychological (JP): to stimulate students by interaction with their peers. For the most part, the aims, accruing from the experience of playing together, expressed what the teacher intended for the group and were aims, that is broad statements of intent, rather than specific objectives - what the group might be able to do as a result of the experience gained. Teachers should know where they were going but be flexible on the way (JH). To this end they should strive to engineer situations which would be retained in the memories of their students (KvB); process was crucial.

Not surprisingly, the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages; after all, the interviewees would hardly be continuing to teach groups had they not felt it to be advantageous. The advantages listed of group tuition were social and educational:

- children learn from each other
- the group can provide necessary encouragement
- more learning situations arise by the diversity of group response
- to be able to match the standards of one's peers rather than try to meet the standards of the teacher

- the stimulus of playing with others
- it is stimulating to be with people who are like-minded
- hearing someone play an attractive piece stimulates the others to work out that piece for themselves; this hastens progress
- the group situation of constant change can help prevent the teacher from overwhelming his pupils
- each student can receive a disproportionate amount of attention time over the entire lesson
- it is less pressurised as the individuals are not having the teacher's full attention all the time
- economy of instruction; whilst pointing out something to one person others will overhear
- economy of time
- economy of expense
- shy students are not exposed
- a feeling of involvement
- it helps to combat nervousness and self-consciousness
- rhythmic stability
- improved intonation
- taught in groups children are more willing to do movement exercises and sing
- they are less likely to feel conspicuous
- enjoyment factor
- memory training
- as the members of the group come to know each other self-consciousness and nervousness dissipate; that is crucial for performance
- the critical faculty develops naturally
- notational work can be covered en masse and can serve as an interlude in the lesson
- ensemble playing from the outset

Physically, the last point is relatively easy to achieve within a group clarinet or violin lesson but less so in a group piano lesson, piano duets and trios notwithstanding.

Disadvantages were that it was sometimes difficult to hear individuals - to identify and isolate their problems (SN); and almost by definition, one could not spend much time with them (JL). Other disadvantages were common only to particular instruments; on the piano, touch; on the violin, intonation and tone production. Inconsistently, one of the advantages cited previously was improved intonation though here the interviewee was referring to groups of clarinettists.

The view was widely held that students respond and contribute to a

group lesson in a way that does not happen in a private lesson. Lessons were seen as musical as well as educative, dynamic as opposed to passive and the approach, pragmatic. Part of the rationale underlying the approaches of Yvonne Enoch and Kenneth van Barthold, is the proposition that heuristic or discovery learning is preferable to imparting information directly. Instead of being told the answer to a problem a child is put in a position whereby he arrives at a solution himself out of the learning experiences that have been structured by the teacher:

> When you teach groups the whole emphasis is based on making children listen and learn by discovering things for themselves. You can't do this in the same way when you teach individually; the temptation is to tell the child and to pick up the lesson as you go along. In the group situation you have to prepare the lesson beforehand and that puts a completely different picture on it... (YE)

Kenneth van Barthold too stresses that what students learn from group lessons is not always given in the form of direct instruction:

> The point of the private lesson is instruction. In a class something will happen which one of the group notices; he will then go away and do something about it. The kind of group tuition where one is reduced to saying 'what you have to do exactly is this' is less successful than a situation in which something happens, which unconsciously is noticed, retained and something different done as a result. That virtually cannot happen in the private lesson... (KvB)

Group teaching is not simply a matter of working together but a question of preparation and of relating new experience to work that has gone beforehand (JP). This structuring of learning experiences requires thorough preparation, something, as later implied, for which instrumental teachers are not renowned, and contrasts markedly with individual, one-to-one teaching which is almost totally impromptu.

Without dismissing the rationale put forward, perhaps the most plausible reason advanced, other than the purely economic, is that

musicians have to learn to play together. The realisation of learning to play in order to be part of an ensemble (VF) is better faced at the outset, and if, as suggested, ensemble work is the foundation of musicianship (JP), a period of group tuition would seem crucial for any musician.

Concern, to use a well-worn phrase, is with 'education for all'; 'with children who will never become professionals, they are the majority' (YE). Concomitantly, selection is an absolute anathema to many of the interviewees. Apart from the child who votes with his feet or will not work, Yvonne Enoch's lessons are open to anyone. Moreover each child is encouraged to reach his, or her, own peak however limited in ability as illustrated by the Purcell Room recitalist.

All the interviewees were unhesitatingly against selection with school-based groups, though several selected their groups in the private sector according to certain criteria. Why selection should be justifiable for the private teacher of groups is a moot point, but somehow when money changes hands directly, rather than indirectly through the LEA, progress becomes much more important - in some ways we are not far removed from the nineteenth-century system of payment by results. For some, selection was decided more on extra-musical criteria than on musical aptitude. These extra-musical criteria ran to mundane but necessary conditions: the proximity of the students' homes so that ensemble work was feasible; and naturally, whether they were able to attend the regular weekly group and follow-up lessons (SN). But assuming those preconditions were met, children may be chosen on the grounds that they might benefit from an 'added dimension', or simply 'more direction', to their lives. Whilst it is possible to envisage this profile idea working in a junior school

environment, where the class teacher has an overall view of the interests and knowledge of a child through a range of subject areas and can be said to 'know the child', such a selection procedure would hardly be practicable, or indeed curry favour, in secondary schools where subject staff have a vested interest in seeing that children do not trip out of their lessons for twice-weekly group clarinet tuition.

Of course selection by any method is unreliable and, as pointed out, is at best only a guideline especially with young children. In addition to giving simple tests, as advocated by Peter Crump, to see if the children can respond, imitate, co-ordinate and comprehend, one interviewee sits in on the children's general class lessons before offering them places. Others run a short 'taster' course, known as a diagnostic circus, at the end of which the students either elect to take up lessons through the normal peripatetic provision, or opt to discontinue (VF; JH). Where, after a taster course, selection was by assessment, additional places were open to keen students.

It helps if the individuals within the group are well-matched from the beginning but to ensure members of advanced classes continue to be of similar ability, newcomers can attend class provisionally as non-participant observers (KvB). The size of the intake at the City Lit enables students to be filtered, rather than selected, into groups of like-ability. Similarly, several interviewees sorted their students into one of three groups depending on the standard of the individuals concerned.

Interviewees were equally divided between those that thought parental support necessary and desirable, and those that thought it desirable rather than necessary. Some expressed a certain wariness of parental

support. It was not a total rejection of the supportive role, nor was it a case of the teacher being in loco parentis (cf. Crump 1978); it seems to be a cautious, edge-tool view; a matter of maintaining a delicate balance between keeping parents involved and preventing unnecessary interference. Several encourage parents to observe or learn alongside their children and most enlist parental support with practice, but the point was made that adolescents need to develop their own practice discipline - they may come to resent a three-way teaching situation of teacher-pupil-parent.

Though opinions differed it was possible to arrive at a generally agreed if not an optimum length of time for group lessons. There was a consensus of opinion that lessons should be between forty and forty-five minutes depending on factors such as: the number and age of the students; whether or not the instruments required time for careful tuning. Shorter lessons (30 mins.) for younger children were thought appropriate, gradually increasing in duration with the ages of the learners. Adults could take up to two hours provided there was a short break after an hour. Some accorded with the Suzuki premise that the lesson determines its own length. Another thought that the length of the lesson should be dependent on the quantity of material that could be contributed by the individual students (KvB). In Manchester the Instrumental Service has the flexibility to cater for these considerations as there the length of the lessons is not determined centrally but is left to the teacher's discretion.

We should rid ourselves of the myth that lessons should be weekly (JL). Certainly, in the early stages group lessons should be more frequent than once a week. A combination of a weekly group lesson and a

follow-up, or back-up, individual lesson was considered ideal. These follow-up lessons, really supervised practices, could be taken by interested parents.

Records were kept of student progress and the order in which the material had been presented together with a list of points covered. Much preparation was required in the early stages of learning to teach groups, a fact music advisers and administrators should take into account when allocating non-teaching time, but with experience the work evolved from week to week. Plans were termly though they need not be rigidly adhered to; they should be thought of as being a pattern from which to depart (PP). Preparation could be applied, though not wholesale, to several different groups.

Whilst it is possible to involve all students at all times, involvement has to be constantly worked towards by encouraging discussion and constructive criticism, by ensuring that there is a variety of activities in every lesson and by writing or adapting material to suit the diverse abilities and varying standards of the individuals within the group. It was felt that teachers should learn to play all the instruments taught.

A figure of eight is often said to be the optimum size for a group though piano groups would seem to be somewhat less than that. The size is dependent on a number of factors: the instruments being taught; the level of the course; and the space and time available. Too small, and the students become self-conscious: too large, they lose personal contact (RS). Once established the same number should be retained (JL). Piano groups ranged from three and four to eight in number, but a group of four children was considered ideal as then each child could sit at the

keyboard at the same time. It was thought that groups of infants should be less than eight as they demand more of the teacher's attention time. Naturally, for the purpose of involvement, the size has to be limited, but if we accept Robert Plowright's contention that students do not have to perform at every lesson in order to progress, then some groups would be larger than we would normally expect. At one time there were auditors - that is non-performing listeners - in the classes of the Paris Conservatoire. Adults can be taught in large classes so too can string players who, in any case, when one thinks of their orchestral role will later become used to playing with a large body of players. On a string instrument a wrong playing action can easily be spotted and the sound produced en masse is not overbearing, whereas multiples of brass players may be quite a different matter. Advanced students, however, on whatever instrument, should be taken in smaller groups.

There was a preference towards teaching groups comprising students of similar age ranges. Save for junior school groups, disparate ages could prove refractory. Whilst the lateral structure of the secondary school need not inhibit the composition of groups - they might well be vertically arranged - adolescents should be socially compatible, kept within their peer group and, as far as possible, matched in maturity and comprehension. True, the wind band at Pimlico did comprise students of all years working at their own levels, but in a wind band there is, like its brass band counterpart, a natural progression of skills and further, clearly defined divisions of those skills.

Group tuition does not have to be limited to entirely like-instrument groups: it could include mixed strings, though perhaps with some assistance; mixed woodwind, as most wind teachers play several

instruments; and mixed brass band instruments, feasible because of identical fingering patterns and, with the exception of bass trombone, all read from treble clef. Orchestral brass - trumpets, French horns, bass clef trombones and tuba - prove more difficult.

Peter Crump makes extensive use of claves as young children find them easy to manipulate. For the rest of the interviewees, they tended not to use additional instruments other than providing piano accompaniments to the instruments being taught.

Finding suitable materials did pose problems. Some pointed out that much of the material on the market was of the 'wrong type'. Materials designed for individual lessons may well be inappropriate for group use.

> ... it seems to assume that individuals will, in their practices, want to play something which is satisfactory in itself. Its use (an individual method) simply extends the use of solo-teaching material to the group situation. (VF)

But with some instruments it is possible and indeed desirable to use the same tutors and music as used in individual lessons, provided that due consideration is given as to how to apply those materials to the group situation. Many of the interviewees, however, have evolved their own material especially with beginner groups. New pieces and studies are written according to the progress of the group and to overcome specific problems. Devising their own material gives teachers the flexibility to decide what to cover next at a particular stage the group has reached; concomitantly the students do not know what will crop up next (RS).

Clearly, the ability to write pieces, adapt and re-write existing material for group use, is something many teachers would find difficult, more from lack of time than from lack of ability. As Julia Lee has pointed out, teachers want material writing for them; it is unrealistic to

expect them to create their own. In the initial stages group work presupposes short pieces. Albums were considered preferable to tutor books as the students hear a wider variety of music. As a corollary to this, a sense of unity emerges from working on a specific composer or on a collection of pieces related by period or subject matter. This is what Kenneth van Barthold meant by limiting and unifying the material around a central theme.

In choosing music an eclectic path was advised and the criteria stated by Yvonne Enoch were that music should be educative as well as attractive. Instead of settling down with a known repertoire new pieces were chosen constantly, hence the need for developing an approach to teaching groups which was not related to one particular tutor book which would then have to suffice for all purposes. In any case, no one method is ever fully comprehensive.

Controlling the material is crucial. Robert Spencer and Graham Owen recognised the difficulties of monitoring and evaluating the material rather than the children, but ostensibly there is little reason why the 'average' instrumental teacher would not be able to do both; after all observing the pupils and forming an assessment of their needs before deciding on the next stage, is central to any teaching strategy. The difference would seem to be that here the material is being carefully tailored to suit individual requirements within the group, as opposed to deciding that everyone has reached a norm and can be given material off the peg. Of course, giving out new material at each lesson, as Robert Spencer does, presupposes that everyone has assimilated last week's work.

Keeping to a group norm was rejected by Graham Owen as being

educationally unsound, though others seem to be at variance and aim for uniform progress. It is possible that the differences in view could be attributed to the substantial dissimilarity of the instruments being taught. As suggested, clarinet groups can be split up from time to time if individual attention is required whereas this is not so straightforward with piano groups. Furthermore Graham Owen's view leads one to suppose that group lessons may be less swiftly paced than individual lessons; that group learning takes place in a series of short sharp stages followed by plateaux, so giving certain individuals chance to catch up with the rest.

Particular attention was given to the rate of presentation, indicating that less material was to be covered more often, presumably recognition that it is necessary to repeat pieces periodically to prevent the group from forgetting what has already been learned. Robert Spencer, feels that in organising the material the steps should be logical, but Kenneth van Barthold, is doubtful whether to present the material in a logical, developmental sequence or, instead, structure learning experiences. For Graham Owen, there was no doubt. Rather than following an ordered pattern of learning notes, which in any case is purely arbitrary in many tutor books, the sequence of which notes to learn next is determined by the compass of the tunes the children want to play. The advantage of this would appear to be two-fold; firstly, goal directedness is shifted from learning notes, exercises and scales to learning pieces, and that acts as a very real stimulus; secondly, the need for achievement is reinforced in their own terms. In short: they can play music that they recognise as music. The approach is very different from that of acquiring skills which are then put on ice to be

used at a later stage. It is a 'here and now' approach rather than one of deferred gratification. Of course playing tunes, an expressive attitude, as opposed to exercises, an instrumental attitude, is far from being a new idea. This is a premise of many commercially successful tutor books whose authors recognise that children want to play pieces rather than 'exercise 27, sequential diminished sevenths'.

Spatially the absence of music stands enables the teacher to get in amongst the class to hear what is happening. Use of the overhead projector, or of large charts, means that: all the students have the same focal point; their attention is directed on to one piece of music; when pointing to that music all the students can follow at the same time; they can change lines quickly and easily, and attend to someone else's part both visually and aurally. Moreover, the teacher can face the instrumentalists.

Differentiating between the intrinsic qualities of playing music and playing musical games seems especially pertinent at present as there appears to be an increasing market for musical games of all kinds. In the main, musical games were not an integral part of the approach. They were considered useful but to be dispensed with at the earliest opportunity as the time could be better spent making music. Some would have one believe that games are a standard resource of group teaching, a regular part of the group teachers stock-in-trade; clearly this is not the case. Where musical games may be of use is in providing reinforcement by repetition, without the boredom of regularity, or in holding the interest of young children in whom physical action is vital. Secondary school and adult groups can usually move into a lesson at a high level of musical involvement; thus games would be of little use to

them.

Rote and memory learning are used extensively in the early stages. Sheila Nelson believes them to improve intonation, and Christine Brown opines that technique is better taught by rote as then concentration is on the technical matter rather than on reading. Notably, guitarist Robert Spencer maintains that you play better if you play from memory - notable for there is something of a tradition of aural memory learning amongst guitarists possibly because large numbers of them are self-taught. Even classical guitar has only recently gained respectability in the Conservatoires and many of today's luminaries have had to find tuition elsewhere, Spencer included. But if memory and reading skills tend to be mutually exclusive as he suggests, they need not be. After all, this has long been a criticism levelled at the Suzuki method yet, as Peter Crump affirms, 'handled intelligently' using memory in conjunction with reading, problems need not arise. If the amount of repetition which occurs in a group situation were greater than in an individual setting, memory learning should come readily.

The structure of group lessons would seem to be developmental and sequential in terms of a series of learning experiences and in the manner of the spiral curriculum associated with Bruner, rather than in terms of a hierarchy of musical skills ordered according to which component skills need to be acquired before others become learnable:

> I'm looking at what happens next, not that it is page four next because we have just done page three. (GO)

Certainly the spiral idea where the same concepts are tackled again and again, but at increasingly rigorous and advanced levels, would seem appropriate.

The two issues of co-operation and competition are not at odds; they

enhance each other and, according to the interviewees, a balance is not difficult to maintain. Careful thought on the part of the teacher can ensure that competitiveness within the group is of a healthy constructive kind; that each child is not jockeying for position. The aphorism that we live in a competitive world, is perhaps truer today than ever before, but competition has its place (JP). Julia Lee and Christine Brown believe competitiveness to be instinctive in the group situation; competition is the child's natural tendency and worst still the parents' (JL). But the competitive element can be put to good effect if handled carefully and if deliberately introduced to stimulate interest (SN). As Julia Lee avers, the teacher must steer the attitude of the group in a positive direction and especially so when criticising others.

Development of what Yvonne Enoch terms the 'critical faculty', leads, she believes, to a greater degree of aural perception and sensitivity in performance, so as well as deliberately introducing the competitive element between each member of the group, each one will come to take on the role of his own and his peers' critic, so evaluating one another's performances. Each one learns to criticise and to be criticised (JP).

There seems at least two forms of peer assessment implicit in this approach. Firstly, peer assessment as expressed in the form of constructive criticism of an individual by other members of the group; and secondly, a personal, norm-referenced assessment by which the individual can assess his own position in relation to others in the group. Together the two kinds of assessment would seem to focus listening awareness on a number of levels: listening to themselves; attending to the sounds of others; and ultimately, hearing the group in ensemble.

On the whole co-operation was thought to come naturally though one interviewee taking groups of mixed junior school children refuted this. A problem of sexism, highly relevant in these times of equality, appeared peculiar to the group concerned but is nonetheless worth airing. Sex-typing, the process by which members of a group take on the distinctive behaviour expected of boys and girls; the boys 'assertive and noisy', the girls 'quiet and reserved'; necessitated compensatory measures, in this case hiving them off into separate groups for one of their twice-weekly lessons, but to what extent the problem exists in group teaching generally is conjectural.

Similarly, suppositions were made on student wastage. In groups discontinuance can have a knock-on effect (CB), it can become a popular idea (JH), and a chain reaction (SN). If the reasons for terminating lessons are 'valid and acceptable' then the effects on the rest of the group are lessened. Undoubtedly, what counts as acceptable and valid reasons is highly subjective. Drop-out did, however, seem minimal though some pointed out that this had not been the case with earlier attempts at teaching groups. Success it was proffered was due to the nature of the activity taking place. Seemingly, groups become social units which can provide an incentive to continue (RP). It appears that the group itself helps keep them together provided that the individuals feel that their contribution is important. It is the Brunerian principle of Intrinsic Motivation - the feeling that one's own role is complementary to those of others within a group co-operating toward a common goal. Furthermore, the cohesiveness of the group seems to suggest acculturation, adoption of the values of the group by the individuals, in tandem with a high level of involvement and social orientation.

Whilst a sense of social unity is requisite for the running of the group, knowledge of the individual is paramount (JH). All interviewees showed great awareness of individuals. It is the individual differences within the group that make the activity stimulating. For the students' part, the more advanced they become so their awareness of the contributions of others increases (SN).

Whereas a balance between co-operation and competition may not be difficult to maintain, what is difficult to control is, apparently, the degree to which pupils come to depend on each other; to hold a balance between peer teaching, wherein pupils share responsibility for teaching one another, and over-helpfulness on their part: for a pupil that is helped too much will never learn to think for himself (YE). But though help can sometimes turn to dependence, co-operation need not be in terms of interdependence. It is as bad for students to rely on being part of a group as it is for them not to be able to fit into a group (JL). Ultimately, if group teaching is to be considered successful group-taught students should become independent of both group and teacher. The illustrations of peer teaching, wherein one pupil took responsibility for teaching another to 'tongue properly' or to 'play double thirds', served to show, albeit in a self-evident way, something of the learning network and measure of interaction taking place. Particularly illuminating were the interviewees' and students' knowledge of who was where in the group, what Sheila Nelson (1981), would term establishing a hierarchy of achievement and Julia Lee, matching the standards of one's peers rather than meeting the standards of the teachers. Inevitably, in establishing a hierarchy of achievement, certain members will lead the others.

Teachers should recognise when cross-learning - students learning

from another - occurs, and not intervene. Even with young pupils there are times when they can be left to themselves (JL). Occasionally, it may be necessary to split up the group if individual attention is necessary, to separate the advanced from the others, or for the advanced to be paired with the less advanced. Most interviewees were, however, chary of placing certain individuals together.

The question of how group and individual teaching approaches differ, elicited a wide variety of replies reflecting to some extent the multiplicity of different methods of teaching. There were, however, areas of common experience and it was suggested that a group teaching approach differs from that of individual teaching in at least three ways:

(i) in its organisation and pre-planning

(ii) in stimulating response, interaction and total involvement

(iii) in taking account of wider social and educational implications

The skills required were not normally associated with instrumental teachers in this country; thus a new entrant to teaching groups has much to come to terms with (VF). The attributes listed of a group teacher were multifarious; many of them equally applicable to the teacher of individuals, so for this interpretation those common to both types of teaching have been discounted. The rest centred on being extrovert and dynamic in personality and, though organised and clear about long term aims, having the ability to think quickly and improvise if a lesson does not go according to plan. The inability to produce one's own material was not in itself considered a drawback (PC).

There is no one way of learning to teach groups; there are several ways (SN). Emphasis was made of the need to see other experienced group teachers working, though here were two anomalies. Firstly, this had not

been the particular path taken by several of the interviewees. Many had learnt to teach by practice. Their ability to handle groups had improved with experience; the teacher's craft developing alongside that of the students (RP;YE). Moreover, in order to learn from the students the teacher had to grant them their independence; that in turn pinpointed the objectives (RP). Secondly, since teachers are not consistently exemplary, observation would necessarily have to be over a period of at least several weeks. Further, it was suggested that teachers ought to establish their own way of working before assimilating and absorbing other approaches (GO). Although there was no substitute for working with an experienced practitioner over a period of time, Christine Brown had found films a useful introduction to group teaching.

For Yvonne Enoch and Christine Brown, repeated attempts at group teaching were made possible by the help given to them by other members of staff who could take charge of the children if necessary. Having sufficient help at the beginning of one's career is something else which music advisers and administrators would do well to remember, should a serious attempt be made at implementing group teaching on a wider basis.

Victor Fox urged teachers to take up a different instrument as only then, he claimed, did they realise how difficult skills are to acquire. Presumably, the view held here is that there is one certain way of perfecting your empathy with a pupil: switch roles with him. Similarly, Robert Plowright advocated that future group teachers should gain group experience from the student end. Others felt that we should stop training instrumentalists as soloists.

There would it was conjectured, be an inevitable swing towards training teachers to handle groups. The present teaching diplomas, those

awarded by the conservatoires as distinct from teacher training certificates, were considered wholly inadequate, especially when compared with those of other countries. Two factors affecting how teachers are taught were, according to Kenneth van Barthold, the British amateur tradition, together with an insistence on liberality and individuality. As stated above it was felt that student teachers should be given the opportunity to observe practising teachers and in turn have the chance to take lessons under supervision (JL; PP).

Sheila Nelson averred that without proper training prospective group teachers were likely to be disastrous teachers. Certainly the antecedents of the interviewees indicate that several of them began to flounder until attending a group teaching course. Most agreed that like general class music teachers, instrumentalists needed some guidelines at least at the outset of their careers and another advocated periodic checks on their achievement. Digressing for a moment, there is something to be said for the American 'competency-based' teaching movement whose proponents train student teachers and in-service teachers in the specific skills of interaction with pupils in the classroom setting.

The majority of instrumentalists could become effective group teachers though some, it was proffered, fought shy because they thought it to be a new concept, one which they did not understand, and those who had been teaching individually for many years may find groups difficult because of the need for spontaneity. Whilst self-discovery in teaching was said to be important, there was no belief in the notion of the 'born' teacher. Kenneth van Barthold had an abhorrence of the idea of teaching as an art in itself. It required, he affirmed, an executant of high repute. This view, that teaching skills are in direct relationship to one's own

instrumental skills was reiterated by Jane Pamment who wanted time set aside for teachers to keep their own playing skills at a high level. Kenneth van Barthold went further. He held that the higher the stature and skill of the performer/teacher, the more relaxed the ethos that he emanates. Even in summary this is a difficult point to grasp, but often in school the more skilled the teacher the more settled the atmosphere of the classroom. The extremes of wild enthusiasm and passivity are frequently to be distrusted. Stature per se, however, seems to be of little consequence.

Although the teaching styles of group and general classroom lessons were considered comparable, there the similarities ended and many interviewees were averse to putting instrumentalists through a period of classroom practice. The distinction drawn by Victor Fox was clear. The emphasis in group teaching, he opined, was on skill acquisition - that was not the purpose of general class music teaching. As skill acquisition was a necessary precondition, Ken McAllister upheld the viewpoint that students should be taught by specialists. None, however, were as adamant as Kenneth van Barthold to whom the acquisition of skill was paramount. Paraphrasing what he said: instrumental playing requires total submission to the disciplines inherent in that skill; the degree to which total submission is resisted is the extent that freedom as an artist is lost.

All interviewees saw the idea of group teaching going beyond the elementary stages of tuition supposing that is, that there were substantial differences in exactly how it should develop. Julia Lee ventured that there may be a limited period of time a group could function - perhaps three or four years. Jean Horsfall pinpointed that time to the third year of tuition, and Sheila Nelson preferred both individual and group lessons

from approximately grade IV standard. Others too justified the use of individual in addition to group lessons in the later stages, some advocating a combination of small and large groups with smaller groups for advanced students.

The rationale proffered by Graham Owen for group teaching beyond the elementary stage was that if it were based on sound educational principles it should be appropriate for all standards. Jane Pamment supported this view believing groups to be beneficial at any level; thus she saw the master class as a high flown form of group lesson. Certainly, both the master class and what the Americans term a 'clinic' do lend plausibility to the idea of sophisticated group work, though some might argue that these are not group lessons in the true sense. But whilst there may or may not be legitimate group teaching situations at high levels (VF), there are times when individual attention is necessary. Peter Crump believed that one-to-one teaching may well be appropriate to some teenage pupils. Indeed, in Manchester junior exhibitioners are entitled to individual lessons. Based on a plateau phenomenon, periods of intensive one-to-one teaching are given with the intention of speeding the progress of certain individuals to carry them through to the next level.

It was suggested that group learning differs from individual learning in time scale (JP). If shown graphically the development of Yvonne Enoch's piano groups would suggest a classic learning curve,ie.,that the group improves very slowly in the beginning stages followed by rapid progress and an eventual slowing down again. The comparison between the progress of group-taught children and that of individually-taught children was especially illuminating. It was suggested that by the second year group-taught children were generally on a par with those individually

taught and ahead of them by the end of the third year.

That lessons are developmental and sequential there can be no doubt but particularly stressed was a continuous sense of momentum (JH); that groups should be taught in a way that does not hold them back later on (RS). Sheila Nelson showed an especial awareness of this. She argued that initially seven-year-old children were more rewarding to teach than six-year-olds who, though taking longer to progress, were often more physically flexible. In Robert Spencer's guitar classes, in order to achieve quick results, two musical activities were done at once, singing and playing. Moreover, each student's part was self-contained; it made sense away from the group, and independence of parts was tackled from the beginning. Others felt that students could hold parts on their own within a very short period of time: as early as the second lesson (CB); by the second term (JH); or from approximately grade one standard (SN); but it was largely a question of material. The surprisingly early stage Graham Owen's students were able to hold parts on their own (2 weeks) was reached by constructing the material so that initially there was plenty of unison playing with only occasional notes, perhaps a third below, divided between the various players.

Providing quick results, Robert Spencer conjectured, created in students the morale to progress,but others concluded that actually coming to class motivated practice. The motivation was effected through group activity and through being with others (SN); it was here that they gained musical and moral support (RS). We can surmise, with moral certainty, that motivation is as vital for group teaching as for any effective teaching.

Yvonne Enoch comes down firmly on the side of the comprehensiveness of

a group approach. She affirms it enables a much wider range of skills to be covered than would normally be possible in individual lessons. Furthermore, the accent is on training musicians rather than instrumentalists and, according to Christine Brown, musicianship develops more naturally in group lessons whereas it has to be catered for in individual lessons. The spin-offs of this were felt to be the development of the critical faculty (YE); increased knowledge of repertoire (JP); and that aural awareness is stronger because of the need to listen to one another (CB; KM). Sheila Nelson holds the view that reading skills can be readily taught in groups and Jane Pamment is convinced that having to concentrate proves beneficial in other areas. Peter Crump cites an example of students learning harmony through improvisation rather than by a 'theoretical' method.

Whilst the point made earlier, that the British amateur tradition may impede or at least hinder professionalism (KvB), is perhaps applicable to the teachers of post-graduate, would-be concert pianists and soloists, several interviewees set out to fit their students to follow in the best traditions of amateurism, ie., to play as a pastime rather than any suggestion of unskilfulness. Essentially the learning outcomes, as outlined by Yvonne Enoch, carry over to future spare-time music making and reflect the skills needed by the competent amateur pianist. The interrelated skills of ensemble playing; improvisation; keyboard harmonisation; and transposition to name but a few. Yvonne Enoch believes that these skills, neglected in the early stages, are usually those with which the teachers themselves have difficulty, possibly because they started them too late. However, she proffers reassuringly that since these skills are acquired gradually over a considerable period of time,

the teacher can improve his own ability in these areas as he teaches. The skills taught equip the children to play informally, perhaps using their playing at a social gathering, and to satisfy [1] 'the demand for re-creation (sic) that goes on from childhood to the grave.' What is being taught is, in Newson terms, 'education for leisure' and in the present climate of mass unemployment we can expect this idea to be taken up with considerable alacrity. However, as Plummeridge (1981) has pointed out, such a notion needs to be looked at somewhat circumspectly. Leisure in this context would seem to mean using our playing skill in the British amateur music-making tradition, often working very hard and contrary to playing at one's leisure. Again from a purely practical view there is hardly enough time in a weekly individual lesson to include regularly these musicianly skills in addition to playing pieces and kindred technical studies.

By and large it would seem that group-taught students show a readiness to take part in ensemble activities. Ensemble experience, considered by Julia Lee a neglected field, comes naturally in a group and for the most part, students play in other ensembles as soon as they are able (SN). Only one interviewee expressed caution as to when ensemble playing, other than in the group lesson, should begin (JH); she felt that students should first be familiar with the fingerings of the pieces. Ensemble playing, it was said, alerts players to the different styles and sounds that are possible. As is often the case with musicians, many of the students cited by the interviewees, participate in almost every school activity, play sport and join the various societies.

Practising, Sheila Nelson ventured, was the hardest thing to teach. Christine Brown advocated time be set aside at school and Victor Fox pointed out that the need to structure practice was not always related to

the socially disadvantaged. Yvonne Enoch admitted a radical change of view regarding practice at home. Formerly there had seemed little purpose in giving piano lessons to pupils without pianos at home on which to practise, but her Tower Hamlets' experience had convinced her that pupils can gain much from the group lessons alone. The point was made, however, that irrespective of whether a child is taught individually or in a group, he must be shown how to practise. That this is a learned habit, acquired through social interaction there is no doubt, but here the advantage of the group situation would seem to be that it motivates practice. The feeling of not letting the group down (RS), of competitiveness within the group (JH), or simply knowing that one has to play first (JL); stimulates practice. Naturally, parental involvement helps instil regular habits of practising. Jane Pamment finds children like the security of the parent knowing that they are working.

With regard to the question of rhythmic sensitivity, the emphasis on ensemble experience ensures that the students are almost certain to become alert and sensitive to the playing of others. There was, however, a great deal of uncertainty as to whether group-taught students are more rhythmically sensitive than those who have received individual tuition, but the sheer weight of numbers in a group was said to be beneficial in that students had to acquire rhythmic discipline in order to play together. Presumably those subscribing to the notion that rhythm is caught and not taught, suppose the momentum engendered in a group to be contagious? To counter this conception, Robert Spencer claimed that in one sense group work is unrhythmic; it is metronomic. But the positive aspects were that an understanding of counting and metre may be gained by acquiring rhythmic continuity, learning to keep going; and for those who have difficulty

learning rhythm patterns, the others in the group provide the opportunity of hearing the correct version several times (JL), supposing that they all play the rhythm as given.

There were many difficulties and imponderables in estimating success. In any assessment the outcomes should be considered against the original aims in establishing the group (KvB). The outcomes may be in terms of musical, personal and social skills or, more significantly, a combination of all three. Julia Lee believed there to be therapeutic advantages to teaching adults in groups. For others with some measure of recreative adult education experience, learning outcomes, that which the student acquires as a result of the learning experience, emphasised attitudes rather than knowledge and skills. One interviewee, who taught children, professed that there was an immediate response by which the success of the lesson could be determined (CB). In total, considerable stress was placed on attitudes. Success was determined by 'enjoyment','enthusiasm', and 'understanding' - it is interesting that Suzuki makes a distinction between ability and understanding - and though intangible, relative qualities, such words were reiterated time and time again. Perhaps further clarification would be in order. Yvonne Enoch concluded her interview by saying without any qualms that, 'success (in group teaching) is terribly simple: the enjoyment of the individual child'. Two words, success and enjoyment, were given undue weight. Clearly success in this context does not mean getting progressively nearer some desired ideal performance though that could well be secondary. What she means by 'enjoyment' is qualified in an earlier article. Again, a guarded note has to be struck here. Like the phrase 'education for leisure' the word is open to a number of interpretations and is probably best described as

active enjoyment, the pleasure derived from being involved:

> [2]What is the "fun" element in learning? What makes the effort worth while? There is a certain satisfaction in playing a piece as well as one is able at the present time and there is excitement in stretching out to conquer the next pinnacle; an enormous amount of enjoyment is derived from reading through music as yet unfamiliar; playing with others either as accompanist or in chamber music is a pleasure shared that far exceeds anything that can be had alone, and exploring music, in its fullest meaning, through the keyboard - these constitute the "fun" elements of learning.

Continuance was also a common theme but from an assessment viewpoint offers little mileage. Without reducing it to a simple, self-evident aphorism, success is continuance: failure discontinuance; it is hard to see where this leads us. Moreover, the experience of playing was considered by many to be beneficial even if the students were to discontinue (JH), group learning it was mooted was not something which is learnt and then lost (RS).

One interviewee advocated that the lessons should be evaluated by how the students perform (KvB),whilst another regarded evaluation as much more on-going and saw success as working consistently hard to a pattern (KM).

Examinations were of little consequence. It was felt that grade examinations did not test comprehensively and several interviewees categorically denied using them. They were at best a side issue; there were other incentives. Standard, Kenneth van Barthold opined, is not created by rigorous training but by creating an ethos in which there is very good playing. Just as an aside he suggested that this happened in brass bands and resulted in the standards we have come to expect of brass players in this country. The writer is reminded of a conference in which a well-known cornettist gave a stunning recital to an audience largely comprising American academics. Following his performance one of the

Americans put the question 'what kind of mouthpiece are you using?' To the astonishment of the audience, the soloist replied that he knew neither the make nor size. Possibly this is an example of what Kenneth van Barthold means when he says, that the process by which the players become proficient they themselves might not understand. Apparently, during Kenneth van Barthold's time at the Paris Conservatoire no one talked of technique yet technique was acquired.

To return to what Jane Pamment referred to as the paradox of group work, that it would seem to meet the needs of the individual, is to conclude with a consensus. Highly individual, personal skills can be taught in groups, efficiently and pleasurably. Individuality is heightened by the presence of other individuals (KvB). But if teaching individuals through group tuition seems a contradiction in terms, what more logical way is there of emulating the achievements of others, of relating to another's playing? It is axiomatic that each child represents his own set of problems (KM) therefore, whilst tuition is in groups, we can suppose that any assessment should be in terms of the individual. Ultimately, the student will have to be able to perform without the help of the group thus group teaching is a means to an end (KvB).

The first stage of the thesis provides in effect both a primary source of opinion and a firm foundation upon which empirical work can be built. Some of the fundamental principles and procedures highlighted by the acknowledged group teachers are explored empirically in the next stage.

[1]Enoch, Y. Group Piano Teaching, Music in Education, Vol.42 No.396 August 1978 Supplement p.iv

[2]Enoch, Y. Notes on Teaching Piano, Music Teacher, Vol.52 No.11 November 1973 p.12

Chapter Six

6.1 Drawing hypotheses from the practitioners

In keeping with the illuminative, practice-based concept of the study, hypotheses were drawn from the practitioners themselves, where possible, using their language and conceptual structures, constrained only by what could be framed specifically and was reasonably testable in the context of instrumental lessons. The Q-sort unearthed an abundance of speculative statements and hunches sufficient to keep an army of researchers busy for several years. However, it was thought feasible to examine eight statements in all, firstly by systematic observation - codified using pro formas, for recording utilisation of time, teacher performance, and student outcomes; and secondly, more meaningfully, by case study technique - building up a continuous, on-going record, descriptive of both the 'instructional system' and the 'learning milieu'. Cross-checking rather than proof, in any case rarely obtainable in a study of this kind, was the main strategy of validation and came in the data of the supportive technique. The hypotheses are stated as follows:-

(i) It is possible to involve all the students to the greatest part of the total lesson time

(ii) Whilst much of the lesson time is spent acquiring skills, group-taught students spend more time, compared with individually-taught students, in musicianship

(iii) The paradox of group work would seem to be that it meets the needs of the individual in at least three areas: in the acquisition of skill, information and musicianship

(iv) The cohesiveness of groups seems to suggest acculturation, adoption of the values of the group by the individuals, in

tandem with high levels of commitment and emulation/ imitation

(v) Group teaching enables a wider range of skills to be taught than would be the case in an individual lesson

(vi) A group approach requires higher levels of preparedness, interaction, awareness of individuals and personal dynamism

(vii) In a group approach there is more emphasis on heuristic, or discovery learning than on direct instruction

(viii) Whilst a sense of social unity is requisite for the running of a group, the teacher's awareness of an individual within a group is at least comparable to his awareness of a subject taught individually

6.2 Designing observation pro formas

Pro formas were formulated for recording three areas of observation, utilisation of time, teacher performance, and student outcomes.

The utilisation of time or instrumental activity pro forma takes each of the three main categories - of Keith Swanwick's learning outcomes model - acquisition of skills, disseminating information, and attending to musicianship, together with their respective seven sub-sections: aural discrimination; manipulative; notational; technical vocabulary; historical background and social context; structure; and expressive character. Two further categories were added: the first to record time spent in setting up and packing away; the second known as off-task, included to take account of inappropriate activity. Time spent in each of the categories and sub-sections was recorded by means of a commonly used technique known as time-sampling or interval method. Each activity was coded according to the general category, indicated by capital letter, to

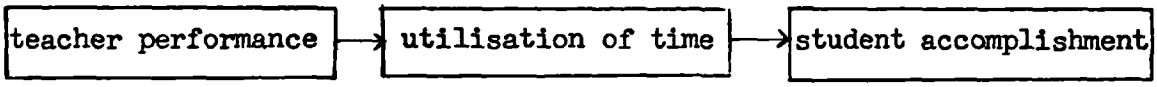
which it belonged and more specifically to the particular sub-section of that category, indicated by lower case letter, thus the code Sa would indicate acquisition of skills as general category and aural discrimination as sub-section. A grid comprising 24, 10-second intervals (4 minutes) in each of the 9 horizontal lines, marks off 36 minutes divided into 216, 10-second intervals. Working from left to right, time was recorded by writing one of the nine codes in each successive 10-second interval.

The student observation pro forma recorded observable student behaviour in terms of specified learning outcomes. Desired outcomes were specified quite precisely to the point, where necessary, of describing what sort of behaviour to look for. Clarifying in this way helped to focus the observation process not only in terms of simple measurable skills which could be easily expressed but it enabled the observer to deal with the complexities and intangibles of musicianship. They, after all, are the more meaningful, valued features of instrumental music lessons. Points of structure and expressive character could, however, be misconstrued by the observer. A ritenuto might be taken as a sign of musicianship but it is conceivable that the slowing down might be due to some manipulative difficulty and where doubt existed, additional factors had to be considered - perhaps the gestures and facial expressions of the player involved. The student observation pro forma listed five categories: levels of commitment; acquisition of skills; musicianship; information; and social interaction. Levels of commitment were determined from three sources: from discussion with teachers; from records; and from a criterion-referenced personal observation using clearly-defined criteria and rating by means of a seven-point scale

the attentiveness of the student being taught. (A seven-point scale was used in favour of a five-point scale in order to show a wider range of discriminations.) All other categories of the pro forma were student-referenced, that is assessed in comparison to the same student's previous performances, although implicit in specifying learning outcomes is the notion of student performance with regard to particular standards. The observer was, of course, looking for gain in every session; less conclusive perhaps in some areas than others.

The third pro forma, teacher observation, completed the record across teacher/activity/student transaction.

fig. 1



The pro forma was an attempt to record teacher performance in a way that could be analysed and compared. Twenty bi-polar constructs were listed against which value judgements were made. The ratings ran from 1-7; favourable constructs were given higher numbers, unfavourable constructs given lower numbers; 4 lay midway between the two extremes. Additionally, the teacher was asked for his/her immediate response following the lesson.

Copies of the three pro formas have been placed in appendix B pp. 365-368.

6.3 Outlining a case study technique

In contrast to the pro formas, case studies of the lessons provided a second means of gathering observational data. They served a three-fold purpose: firstly, in keeping the data both meaningful to the participants and publicly accessible; secondly, by fleshing out the data obtained

from the pro formas; and thirdly, by providing a means of cross-checking the data. The classic paradox with case study datum is that it is 'strong in reality' but difficult to organise[1]. For this reason it was thought useful for subsequent interpretation and reinterpretation to distinguish between antecedent conditions, classroom transactions - both instructional and social, and learning outcomes[2].

fig.2

These were not rigid boundaries used to subdivide the data but rather overlapping areas in which the observer focused his attention. For instance, antecedent conditions - those conditions existing prior to lessons - included previous experience, musical aptitude and willingness, together with the items listed under the category levels of commitment on the student observation pro forma. Again these were ascertained through discussion with the teacher. Corresponding to the remaining sections of the same pro forma, classroom transactions covered any events, whether intended or unintended, that helped the student learn. For example, in one-to-one lessons the encounters with student and teacher; in group lessons the encounters with the 'chosen' student and fellow students and teacher. Learning outcomes comprised the attitudes, skills and knowledge the student acquired - as seen by the observer - as a result of the learning experience. This could be compared, to some measure at least, with the immediate response item on the teacher observation pro forma. It was with these three broad areas in mind that the observer viewed the subjects.

6.4 Selecting subjects for observation

In order to assess the pro formas in terms of comprehensiveness and suitability with the subjects with whom they were to be used, brief pilot studies were arranged. Permission to carry out the study was requested by letter from the Chief Education Officer and this granted there followed a series of three meetings with the Music Inspector and the Co-ordinator for Instrumental Music. It was from these discussions that the four teacher subjects were chosen on the basis of the following criterion: that they should be considered successful in both individual and group teaching situations. One further rider was that each of the subjects represented should have, as far as possible, a wholly different approach from the other three. This was to reduce the likelihood of observing more than one subject teaching according to a particular method or school of thought. To avoid the effects of different teachers under different circumstances the same four subjects, two male and two female, were each observed in both individual and group settings - in any case it was felt that this would yield more valuable data.

A prerequisite in any study of this kind where personal and social qualities are under investigation, is to sample, in so far as one can, the subjects' normal behaviour rather than something expressly produced for the duration of the visits. For this reason, whilst a note was circulated to all instrumental teachers within the Authority informing them of the nature of the study, in general terms, and the dates during which the visits would take place, the three subjects selected were unannounced. Apparently, three of the subjects had qualified teacher status whilst the third was classed as an instructor. Also, three of the

subjects had undergone different kinds of initial training. In both these instances the writer was given no further details at this stage. As it happened, strings, woodwind and brass instrumentalists were represented though this need not have been the case.

As originally conceived with the final two years of Primary education in mind, the range of the students studied was to be limited to those of between 9 and 11 years of age in Primary Schools. This, however, proved impracticable due to insufficient numbers of children within the given age-range opting for individual lessons.* It was decided then to extend the sample to include the first year of secondary education, though in point of fact the eldest student observed was still eleven years of age. As it would be unwise to generalise from observation of students of one age about students of another, the same teacher's individual students were compared with his/her group-taught students of similar age-range - thus comparing like with like. The boundaries of the Authority extend to a predominantly middle class area and another largely socially deprived area. Again, care was taken to match students from the same social milieu. Though not intentional, three sectors of educational provision were also represented, Church, State and Independent (fee paying).

Matching group-taught with individually-taught students meant that circumstances, if they did not dictate which groups and individuals to observe, reduced the choice considerably; the choice, however, had still to be made. Working on the assumption that it was easier to find individually-taught students of a given age and type and relatively more

*The authority has a scale of charges for instrumental instruction closely linked to those found in the private sector. Group lessons are less expensive than individual lessons and therefore more popular at elementary level. In Primary schools group tuition is free but parents willing to pay may opt for individual lessons.

difficult to find groups to order, four group students were chosen from two separate age bands 9*-10 and 10-11. Leafing through the subjects' timetables it became apparent that each teacher tended to work more with one particular age-range than another so in the end circumstances and accessibility proved to be the decisive factors. At this point Headteachers in all the schools taking part were notified.

Immediately prior to observing the first group lesson, the writer asked each teacher to identify the member of the group most similar in standard in terms of musical ability to the individual student about to be observed. Each pair had also to be of the same sex. It was therefore necessary at this stage to inform the teacher which individual lesson was to be visited. The same two students, one selected from the group the other individually-taught were, of course, recorded both in terms of time spent in the various activities using the Instrumental activity pro forma and in terms of observable behaviour using the Student observation pro forma. The former was recorded during the lesson, the latter completed together with the Teacher observation pro forma retrospectively, immediately following the lesson. By limiting the observation to only one student subject at a time, the observer was able to devote the same level of attention to both the individually-taught and the group-taught. Observing the latter was made less obvious by the possibility of there being more than one subject, discounting the teacher, on which to focus. Concomitantly, one would suppose that it made the subjects significantly less self-conscious. Each student was observed weekly and teachers twice weekly - once in each setting - for a period of one month.

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*Some members of the group other than the student observed were, however, younger than this.

[1] Lawton, D. et al. Theory and Practice of Curriculum Studies London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978 p.185

[2] Stake, R. in Beyond the Numbers Game ed. Hamilton et al. London: Macmillan 1977 p.153

Chapter Seven

7.1 Profiles of the subjects

Before recounting the lessons the following pointers are given. Since profiling the student subjects at the outset of the study the observer came to know them more fully through their actions and behaviour during the four-week period. In the light of that experience, on re-reading the typescript it was tempting to flesh out the concise character sketches. It was decided, however, to let them stand as formerly thus leaving the reader to experience, as the observer did, the gradual emergence of the subjects' distinctive personalities and to infer from the descriptions of the lessons, the critical factors influencing those diverse personalities. That the descriptions sometimes appear lengthy and detailed is in keeping with the sheer number of themes the study throws up and complexity of events that occurred. In any case such details are the very stuff of case study technique, to omit them would be at the expense of essential and significant factors. If the approach seems more impressionistic than statistical then that, to an extent, reflects the nature of the activity under study. The typescripts are rigorously accurate - eye-witness accounts - albeit one person's account, and were carried out as far as possible impartially, applying standards of dispassionate scholarship. In an attempt to counter inherent bias in reporting or preconceived ideas that inadvertently might have coloured the interpretation of events, each of the teachers observed read, clarified or amended the typescripts of his or her own lessons. They did not, however, see the typescripts of what took place in the lessons of others. When stepping out of the impartial observational role, the writer has made use of the pronouns 'I' and 'me'.

CA

subjects

The two subjects, beginner brass players, attended the same school which had a strong instrumental tradition and a thriving wind band in which the headmaster played the trombone. John aged ten, had been playing for several weeks longer than Paul, a nine-year-old, who acquired his instrument only one week prior to the start of the observation. Of this teacher's pupils the two selected were, within the criteria as stated for matching the subjects, the nearest in terms of standard and age-range. Both musically literate, they had played recorder and been active in school music prior to taking brass lessons, they were of similar musical aptitude, bright-eyed, willing pupils. Predictably, they attended regularly and it was thought that they would in the long term continue to play. John had recently begun to play with the school band.

teacher

Appointed in 1977, CA (male) studied music at Huddersfield Polytechnic. Not having a Certificate in Education, presently he has only instructor status though steps are being taken to second him in the near future. He plays both trombone and jazz piano - the latter only by ear.

materials

Herfurth, P.C.	A Tune a Day Book 1	(Boston/Chappell)
	Complete Method	(Wright and Round)

GR

subjects

Natalie a ten-year-old and Sarah aged eleven were demure and retiring in personality. Each had been playing the clarinet for just over one year, they had had similar manipulative difficulties with the instrument and they were perceived as weak, less than average ability students. Both played in their respective school orchestras and although they attended lessons regularly their commitment, as gauged by the teacher, was uncertain. A notional grade one, they were in many ways the most evenly matched of the four pairs.

teacher

Clarinettist GR (female) completed a graduate course at Huddersfield Polytechnic and has a PGCE from Bretton Hall College of Higher Education. She was appointed in 1974.

materials

Brown, J.R.	Chalumeau Canons	(Chappell)
Herfurth, P.C.	A Tune a Day	(Boston/Chappell)
Weston, P.	First Pieces for Clarinet in the Chalumeau Register	(Schott)

PL

subjects

Both subjects had been playing the violin for two terms and were regarded as beginners. Nicholas, aged eleven, had begun in the group with Philip, a ten-year-old, but within a few weeks had opted for individual lessons. Selected by means of the Bentley test and a short 'suitability'

test given by the teacher, the two boys were considered of average ability, laconic and at times inattentive - Philip more so than Nicholas. Whilst they had turned up regularly for the lessons immediately preceding the observation their earlier attendance records had been chequered. Neither pupil was considered likely to discontinue playing at least within the near future. Nicholas had started to play with the school orchestra.

teacher

Training as a mature student after a career in the Army, PL (male) has a Certificate in Education and five years teaching experience. He is a violinist.

materials

Brewis, Bert. (arr.)	Fun Music Book 2	(Chappell)
Chamberlain, A. & Edwards, J.	Tunes for Two Violins	(Chappell)
Cohen, Eta	First-Year Violin Method	(Paxton)
Nelson, Sheila, M.	Right from the Start	(Boosey & Hawkes)

DB

subjects

John and Ben, both nine-year-olds, had played the violin for two years and were approximately grade one standard. Unassuming and undemanding of attention they were described as fairly conscientious. Their attendance was regular and they were thought likely to continue. The parents of both pupils were educationally aware and took an active interest in attending the lessons whenever possible.

teacher

DB (female) trained as a general class teacher and has a Certificate in Education. A violinist, she has been employed by the LEA since 1971 and, as with the three other teachers observed, this is her first appointment.

materials

Applebaum, Samuel	Early Etudes for Strings	(Belwin Mills)
" "	String Builder	"
Murray, Eleanor	Tunes for My Violin	(Boosey & Hawkes)

7.2 Case study typescripts

CA group lesson 1

It was unfortunate that this teacher's first group lesson to be observed comprised only two students; a school trip had taken a third member away for the day. Nonetheless there was a good deal of interaction between the two students present and on turning to a study they had played the previous week, John's friend, somewhat smaller than John, passed the remark 'oh yes, I remember muffing this one before.'

The lesson had considerable pace. Separately both children gave performances of their respective homeworks after which the teacher proffered some corrective advice together with mostly approving remarks. Next, a duet - though to be precise more a rhythmic exercise in thirds. After an initial breakdown - the comment 'just practising' was heard - the piece was restarted and with some chivvying from the teacher the two trumpeters managed to reach the end. Prior to packing away John rested his trumpet vertically on the bell and, inevitably, the instrument fell over. As the room was carpeted there were no visible signs of damage to the trumpet. John was gently chided and reminded to place the instrument

lengthwise when not in use, advice to which his friend gave an affirmative nod.

CA individual lesson 1

Paul entered the room clutching what looked like either a small baritone or roomy tenor horn case. The instrument was in fact a baritone and this was Paul's first lesson on the instrument. Following some preliminaries on care and maintenance of the baritone, the main activity began with simple physical exercises. In turn, Paul emulated the stance, breathing and tonguing action of the teacher. From there the lesson progressed to 'buzzing' on the mouthpiece, again approached by example. Paul was told to keep his cheeks in and this took not inconsiderable time to accomplish. After being shown the correct way of holding the baritone he attempted his first notes but on grasping the instrument his relaxed, smooth tonguing and breathing actions practised moments ago, changed immediately to strenuous exertions and excessive blowing - the classic beginner mistake that every brass teacher experiences at some time. Several more demonstrations followed before Paul slowly began to make the instrument speak. There was constant revision throughout the lesson which concluded with a further recap of the main points together with advice on what to practise for the following week.

CA group lesson 2

There was some confusion over lesson time brought about by last week's trip, so for this week the group preceded the individual lesson. Without warming-up the two trumpeters - the third member of the group arrived later - began with Yankee Doodle played in unison rather too loudly. Breathing when they felt the need, without apparent concern for phrasing or melodic line, they were told to begin afresh with a deep

breath, then to breathe only at the ends of phrases or where indicated by breath marks. Moving on to an unseasonal rendering of 'O, come all ye faithful' there was some improvement in phrasing and continuity, possibly as the metre and stanzas of the carol were well-known to the players. In short, they had an aural model. Does this then constitute a valid reason for including carols in the opening pages of tutor books - so many of them do? It became clear, however, that in so far as these children were concerned, the problem was more physical than cerebral; they knew not to break phrases but the difficulty lay in sustaining them - perhaps understandable in so young a group.

In an attempt to increase their breath control, the trumpeters played long notes starting with two semibreves then in turn sub-divided them into four minims and still further to eight crotchets. Jenny, apologised for her late arrival but said that she was confused over the time of the lesson! Despite the sex ratio the group cohered immediately.. Jenny hurriedly took her place and joined forces with the boys in playing the long notes. Surprisingly, the overall sound was only marginally louder. John, standing in rapt attention when Can (a Turkish name pronounced Jan) played alone, peered over his shoulder and followed the music - he stood noticeably less close to Jenny.

Briefly outlining how Mendelssohn came to write the Hebrides Overture, the teacher made reference to some music composed by another of his groups. This too, he said, involved a journey not by sea but by train. Describing in graphic detail an approaching and departing train, he asked the group to make up some descriptive music. This, he explained, could be worked on over a period of some weeks but they would begin now. All three children faced the teacher and after a count of four started

to play. At this point numerous questions came into the observer's mind. Uppermost were: how would the group know what to play; on which notes; would they all play different things or somehow by osmosis perhaps play something similar? In fact, the latter happened. Coincidentally, the children chose open notes C and G and after an initial chaotic start one of them came up with the well-worn rhythm:  The idea finally percolated through to the others. John suggested writing 'one of those signs' to show when to become louder and softer. The teacher beamed adding that they should try to notate their compositions themselves. John looked perplexed; when prompted he admitted that he could think of better tunes than he was able to write down.

CA individual lesson 2

The lesson commenced with practical and theoretical revision of the points covered last week. Paul began well and despite one of the valves of the instrument sticking from time to time, he showed some signs of progress at least in actually obtaining sounds. What he found more arduous was pitching certain sounds - especially differentiating between F and B flat, both of which are played open, and remembering the names of the notes other than by recognition of their valve positions.

In attempting to correct his playing, Paul made frequent stops and starts and consequently any sense of continuity that might have developed was lost. The teacher suggested trying to reach the end of the piece before correcting mistakes, pointing out that if Paul were playing with a band it would not wait for him but would play on. After listening to his teacher play, the only time he played in this lesson - his playing input was severely reduced possibly in an attempt to wean his pupil away from over-reliance - Paul made another attempt. He played rhythmically in time

but again at the wrong pitch. It was hard to discern if he could hear the note (F) for which he was aiming but as yet lacked the wherewithal to produce it, or whether he was simply attempting to obtain a variety of sounds, one of which he hoped would be correct. Either way he had remarkable perseverance.

The teacher filled the last few moments of the lesson by reinforcing the points made earlier and with a promise that if Paul increased his daily practice from ten to twenty minutes he would be able to play real tunes with the notes he now knew.

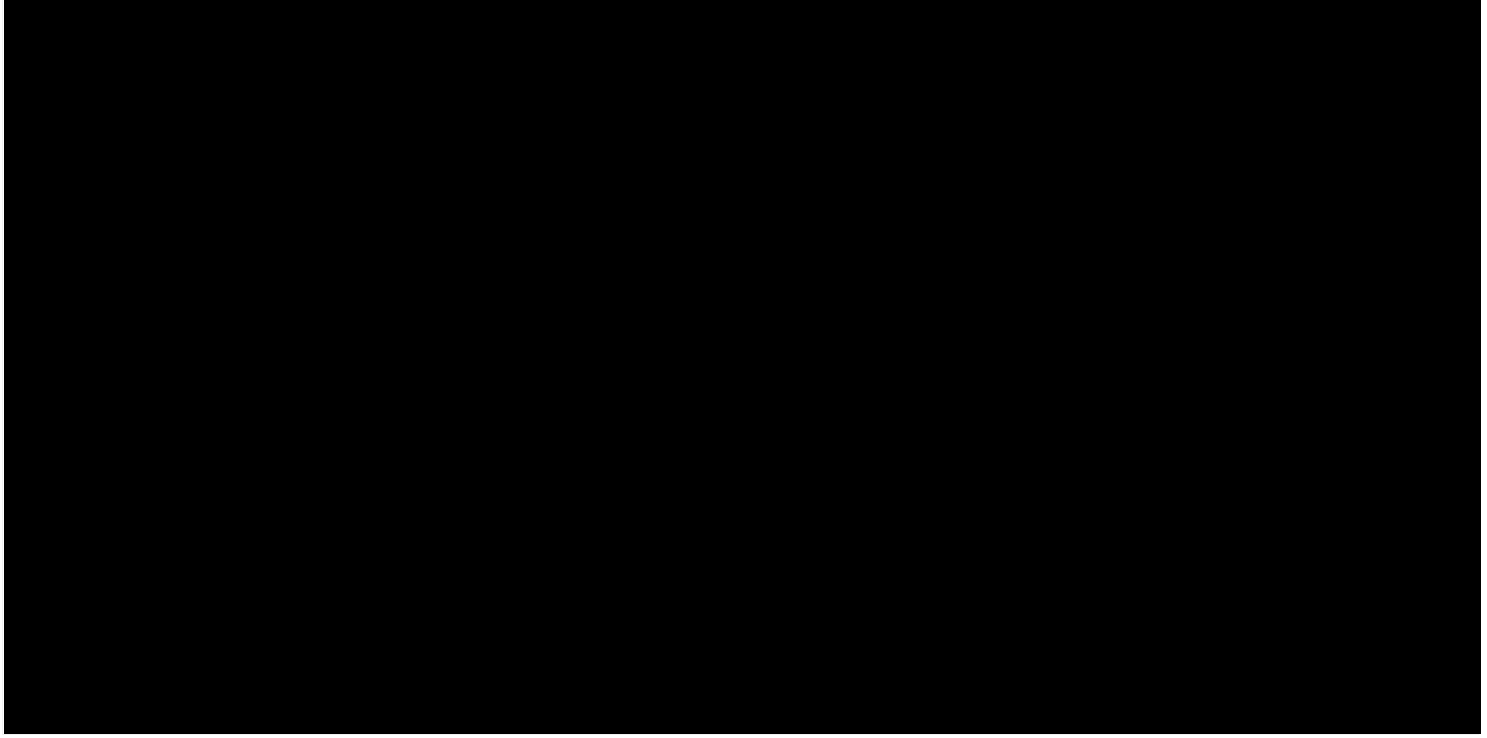
CA group lesson 3

John, arriving early, unpacked his own trumpet along with those belonging to the others and he carefully laid the instruments down lengthwise. He had completed a theory test paper from Tune a Day and as Jenny and Can had still to arrive, the time was spent marking John's work. The answers to some questions, he claimed, he did not know, so had to look back at the explanation given earlier in the book. Jenny, arriving in time for the warm-up, apologised for having forgotten her composition and theory test. They began with Lightly Row, a tune which appears three times in the tutor. Their breath control and endurance had improved though Jenny's comparatively less so. Deck the Halls proved especially taxing as it was by far much lengthier than the pieces they had played hitherto. In the printed version they used, the first and last cadence points had divisi ossia notes (D to C or B to C). John thought the lower one sounded better. Jenny did not express a preference but on reaching the cadence stumbled and played neither note; both trumpeters played B flat throughout the piece instead of the written B natural.

Like Jenny, Can arrived without his theory paper but he had

remembered to bring his composition. Taking seconds to warm up, he joined the others in Hark! the Herald, a rendering marred by becoming weaker as the tune became progressively higher and by Jenny who insisted on starting with an anacrusis - perhaps she was confusing Christmas carols? Little Brown Jug, on the other hand, had an upbeat but John reckoned that in the 'real song' it started on the first beat of the bar. He supported his case by singing wordlessly, the opening refrain. Moreover, chiming in again somewhat precociously, he pointed out that the 'others' were holding the last note (a quaver) too long.

Hastening on; a duet, both lines of which were to be known for the following week. After a preliminary play-through by the teacher using a valve trombone, the group began to play successfully negotiating the repeat marks and persevering through to the end. All three trumpeters mispitched notes but Jenny misplaced C and G alternately. As the boys turned to their compositions, the atmosphere within the group became expectant. John's piece was entitled The Drunken Cossack. He had notated it complete with breath marks every bar, clearly he was intent on being the performer of his music. His difficulty with high notes may account for it lying low in the compass of the instrument. The piece has both structure and expressive character, and represents a considerable achievement. Interestingly, it works canonically, the second player starting one bar later than the first. The teacher suggested changing the B flat in the closing bar to a B natural but John's version is given as follows:



An arrangement by the teacher of John's piece was planned for the school band. Can's piece was less enterprising but nonetheless a worthy attempt. Written not on manuscript but on lined note paper, he had used notation merely as an aide-mémoire though his piece was none the worst for that.

CA individual lesson 3

Paul followed the group again as he had assumed the change of lesson time to be permanent. After taking the instrument from its case he was told to put it back again and to 'buzz' on the mouthpiece the note F before reverting to the baritone. Subsequently, this made possible clear, well-pitched first notes. He looked more at ease with the instrument and his retention of basic playing skills was in marked contrast to his efforts the previous week. During a demonstration of a new study comprising only two notes, the E flat and F March, Paul gazed intently at the teacher rather than following the music he was playing. This seemed a natural reaction as being very familiar with the particular study the teacher played from memory and in any case was passing on an aural rather than written tradition. Paul glancing at the music only to check the

starting note, was trying to recall the sequence aurally but his embouchure let him down - he played homophonically at a fifth below the teacher's pitch. Once more the teacher played whilst this time Paul followed the music and fingered the valve positions. Apart from relaxing ahead of time with the result that he lost pitch again, his second attempt was more successful.

An interesting departure from skill learning took place when binary form was discussed. At this juncture it would have been too easy to plough straight into pieces without giving thought to their structure. The object though of the teacher's explanation was simply to show Paul that in the new piece he was about to practise he had only two parts to learn, sections A and B, but by relating that to form in general the content of the lesson encompassed lateral knowledge as well as that specific to skill learning. A feeling for form and structure was being developed in tandem with basic manipulative skills, not as something to be appended only when those skills had been mastered.

CA group lesson 4

As a consequence of members of the group arriving within seconds of each other, the lesson began promptly. Following a communal warm-up during which Jenny seemed to find difficulty in producing clear notes, the teacher announced that they were to begin the lesson with a game. First they were instructed to form a triangle, each person standing back-to-back so that the others could not be seen. One at a time each person had to select and play one note within a range middle C to the G above (sounding B flat and F respectively). The same note had then to be copied by another player purely on hearing the sound. Only after playing the correct answer were they allowed to choose a new note, in turn copied

by someone else. And so the game continued until they grew bored with having only five notes from which to choose. At this point they were made to sound an additional note (C) before each playing thus forming an interval. Strangely enough, they found this note more a hindrance than, as one might suppose, a help, perhaps because there were two notes to remember, notwithstanding one being the tonic. That such aural games were enjoyed was, judging by the facial expressions of the group, unmistakable.

Moving on to 'the infamous Deck the Halls' as termed by the teacher, the group performance was nothing if not co-operative; a natural division of labour whereby breathing was staggered and the technically demanding passages were assigned to the most dextrous, facile player - John. In some ways it was reminiscent of the brass band line-up in which the tutti cornet players, colloquially known as the 'bumpers-up' play the heavy, taxing passages leaving the principal cornettist fresh for the deft, soloistic sections.

Prior to playing another carol there was a reminder to take breaths only 'at the commas', which by and large they managed. For some reason Jenny was unable to produce the note D and after repeated unsuccessful attempts, she was told to 'buzz' the sound on the mouthpiece. Finding difficulties once more, she averted her eyes. Her problems were put down to two possible causes, insufficient breath support and excessive mouthpiece pressure. In spite of the help given by the boys who joined willingly in the exercise and by the teacher who used the piano to remind Jenny of the sound for which she was aiming,there were few signs of improvement. Consoled by the teacher, the gist of which was what she was unable to play today she might well play tomorrow, Jenny was asked to give a performance of her composition. Although it was notated in four

in a measure, she played in three time; doubtless like John her playing was far in advance of her written skill. The piece entitled train was expressive and lyrical, not at all stylised. Whilst the boys passed favourable judgement much was left unspoken; they looked at her in a new light. For once she had become the centre of the action instead, as in the past, being merely peripheral to it. Composition had been a mutual discovery which bound the group together.

Ostensibly turning from composition, they were asked to play low sounds. 'We're playing my piece in band, aren't we,' John averred correctly, deduced no doubt from the fact that he had written for the low register of the instrument. The teacher gave a wry smile and duly handed out the parts, as promised he had completed the arrangement. John, now totally preoccupied, claimed that he could not wait to hear what it sounded like.

Concluding, the teacher set work for the half-term holiday. He asked the children to revise all the tunes they had learnt adding, 'as if you'd never played them before.' Taking him literally, Jenny queried whether or not he meant they should 'pretend' to play badly.

CA individual lesson 4

On entering the room Paul exclaimed that he 'might give up'. Dumbfounded, the teacher asked why. Paul seemed unsure but expressed concern for his lack of ability on the instrument - he had been playing some four weeks. Reassuring him that he was making steady progress, the teacher delved further; were there other reasons he enquired. Paul thought for a moment before relating how one of his friends had passed 'the test' but was unable to take lessons because all the instruments were already spoken for. Rationalising it down, it was dubious to say the

least that Paul's attitude was the result of a highly developed social conscience, more a lack of confidence in his own ability - a point made overt by the teacher. It was as if Paul was not measuring up to some private notion of how he should be able to play after a four-week period. Whilst avoiding sycophancy constant encouraging remarks were passed. Paul worked hard - if only to placate the teacher - his tone was clearer and generally was more confident than hitherto.

That Paul had a sense of musical line there was no doubt. After playing the following phrases comprising only three different notes, he remarked that they were 'the same but backwards.'

2

Of course, literally this is incorrect, the phrases are tonally inverted, but they sound as if they are turning back on themselves. Whether Paul lacked the wherewithal to express it more clearly or not, the two similar shaped phrases had held some meaning for him and he had related them. Haplessly, there were frequent interruptions during this period. A parent called to speak with the teacher, a tuba player to collect his instrument and a gymnast requested a tambourine! As a consequence the lesson became fragmented; there was no time left to take the points of musical line and phrase that had arisen any further. Before closing the tutor book Paul looked over the page, there were tunes he recognised. With continued effort he would soon be able to play them the teacher encouragingly pointed out. Paul smiled disbelievingly. It will be interesting to hear how he fares.

GR group lesson 1

As a matter of course and politeness on arrival at a school the observer reported directly to the headteacher. Much to my embarrassment on this particular occasion the headmaster was unaware of the possibility of a visit, either he had not received the covering letter circulated by the music adviser or it had been filed unread. Whatever the explanation the headmaster showed more than a little concern and hostility, nevertheless after some assurance as to the nature of the study he acquiesced to the observer's request to stay. In hindsight the observer could have circumvented some of the confusion and hostility with a telephone call the previous day to confirm the visit. Indeed, this course of action was adopted for all future visits.

Five clarinettists, all girls, made up the group. They huddled together forming a semicircle behind two music stands and the lesson began with each child in turn playing by herself whilst the rest listened. At first problems with new reeds and over-tight ligatures caused constant breakdowns but these solved, the group played in unison one of the pieces set the previous week for homework. Occasionally, one child needed more of the teacher's attention time than did the rest but when this happened, rather than separating the individual the teacher focused the attention of the group as a whole on to that person. Natalie W. (there were two of the same Christian name in the group) found difficulty with some of the high notes. Only after ascertaining whether another member of the group and Natalie were friends, did the teacher ask if it were possible to 'get together during the week to go through those notes' - the children seemed used to pairing-up in this way. There were few spoken transactions other than from teacher to group and throughout the lesson the girls were

surprisingly quiet. To conclude: a round and the mention of 'London's Burning' elicited an enthusiastic response.

Next week's homework was written together with the date in each child's book.

GR individual lesson 1

As with the previous group lesson there were problems playing-in a new reed,but these apart, and despite the teacher being painstakingly considerate, Sarah, colouring up facially, appeared very ill at ease. Her embarrassment was embarrassing. She found difficulty in concentrating on the piece in hand, in remembering the key signature and in playing in time. Eventually, after a series of breakdowns the lesson ground to a complete standstill. Unsure of whether to continue or give up, Sarah reluctantly restarted the piece at a much slower tempo whilst the teacher, resorting to the piano, lent support by playing alongside. The lessons to come neither threatened worse than the present, nor promised relief. To what extent Sarah's problems were due to the presence of the observer remained to be seen. It was, nevertheless, a painful lesson for all of us.

GR group lesson 2

On assembling her clarinet one of the group noticed that her new reed was larger than usual and she remarked on this. There was a spontaneous volley of laughter as the teacher, on closer inspection, pointed out that the girl had mistakenly bought a saxophone reed and not a clarinet reed. This incident set the tone for the rest of the lesson. Another reed was found and the group began to play in two parts - three players sharing the upper line and two the lower. Breathing in unison, ten shoulders all rising at the same time, at one point the girls inhaled between a dotted crotchet and quaver; they were promptly corrected. Next, a Sarabande

which placed in the chalumeau register of the instrument and played in unison, sounded rich and well-tuned. Seemingly, the piece was intended more as an exercise in tonguing and slurring than in tone production, but both were incorporated commendably into the performance. Two of the group asked if the teacher would hear them play together as they were in the course of preparing a hymn for morning assembly. The others listened attentively, watching over the music and fingering the keys of their instruments whilst the duettists played. Suggestions as to how the piece might be improved were forthcoming from teacher and group alike.

There was chattering as different tutor books were brought out, some of the group had still to overcome the wrong reed incident earlier. Alone, each player tackled a melody the group had sight read the previous week. Some were more flustered than others. Natalie squeaked throughout her performance and the teacher asked her how she might avoid the unintentional notes. Natalie suggested she play with less of the mouthpiece in her mouth, an answer with which the teacher seemed satisfied. Trying again, Natalie's playing was not technically flawless, there were still nervy moments, odd slips here and there but it was musical and more assured than hitherto. 'Good,' added the teacher 'that's how the end should sound.'

GR individual lesson 2

After the previous week's lesson the observer was anxious at the prospect of meeting Sarah again. Perhaps, being so embarrassed by my presence last time she would absent herself - with just cause. She turned up on time and smiling at the observer, proceeded to unpack and assemble her clarinet. The emotional turmoil of last week's lesson was for all intents and purposes forgotten; this was a new start.

When Sarah attempted to play a minor scale the instrument squeaked on the break notes and she became visibly unsettled. Her sound turned 'steamy' and she began to forget the key signature again. She was told to 'loosen-up', to take out the reed, dry it and to play with less of the mouthpiece in her mouth. Sarah's fingering was still a potential cause of concern - she seemed incapable of finding the keys by sheer tactual memory - but at this stage the teacher's actions were interpreted as to build the confidence of her pupil. Basic manipulative skills were revised; firmly pressing the top teeth and feeling for the finger positions as opposed to looking for them. To conclude: tuning and long notes. In terms of process the lesson was a decided improvement.

GR group lesson 3

The group tackled the first five notes of the clarino or upper register of the instrument. Natalie, who was less sure of high notes than the rest of the group, spent much of the time listening to the others play whilst she followed the music, fingered the keys of her clarinet and kept time by nodding her head. Following the lesson she stayed on by herself and went some way to overcoming her problems, caused largely by not pressing firmly on the pads.

The group played in two parts. Jennifer, who was playing to her feet and suspected of looking at the keys, coupled with Kate on the upper line while Karen and the two Natalies combined on the lower. True, they had been told to learn both parts but clearly some of the group had given more practice time to one line than to another much to the teacher's chagrin. Each player was made to swop lines but somehow the distribution of parts was still not quite right. If they had been told to play the line they had practised, it is doubtful whether anyone would have chosen the lower part. Again they were divided; how were they to play a duet

if everyone opted for the tune?

There was a plague of squeaks and everyone looked towards Karen. A throwaway line about the palaver with the saxophone reed met with spontaneous laughter. Apparently, she had left a half-inch gap between the edge of the reed and the top of her clarinet. The teacher readjusted the ligature and addressing the group, stressed the importance of carefully aligning reed and mouthpiece. They began to play again. Still more squeaks. This time they were attributed to Jennifer whose wrong-sized reed, to which the teacher had already passed censure, had been bought by Jennifer's well-intentioned grandparents who happened to be passing a music shop!

During the middle part of the lesson there were questions on the names of the new notes together with their respective fingerings. 'How many of you play in the band?' enquired the teacher. Four hands shot up. Kate - who without being asked hastened to add that whilst she did not play with the band she played with the school orchestra - was thus absolved. The teacher went on to extol the virtues of ensemble playing in general. More specifically, that through such playing the girls might learn notes that they had still to come across in the lessons. For that, as the animated talk suggested, the group could certainly vouch.

The lesson concluded with an explanation, and subsequent attempt, of how to produce the lowest note of the instrument, E one octave below the treble clef. Playing in the chalumeau register had the additional merit of relaxing the players' embouchures again after so many high notes at the outset of the lesson.

GR individual lesson 3

Reading from music a chromatic scale, Sarah began commendably - allowing that some of the notes did not speak quite so easily as others. The teacher asked Sarah if she knew the scale from memory and, without recourse to the tutor book she started to play again. Against the observer's expectations, Sarah's memory served her well. Somewhat guarded in her praise, and as if seeking further evidence that Sarah really did know the scale, the teacher chose notes at random within the same compass and asked her pupil to play them. But for an occasional frenzied glance at the keys of the instrument, and though the exercise was not yet note perfect, Sarah managed to maintain her composure. Previously in Sarah's lesson the teacher had refrained from using the piano other than to lend support to the melodic line; to accompany Sarah would have been too anxiety-provoking, but now that her confidence was won, adding another independent part seemed a natural step and one which was subsequently made.

Since Sarah was on a French exchange for the following fortnight, this was the last time that the observer attended her lesson. She seemed relieved. She was still confused over left and right hand positions and the role of the octave key, but significant progress, at least in playing in front of someone else, was evident. The observer was left wondering, not for the first time, if Sarah knew any longer quite why she wanted to play the clarinet. Closing the door she smiled at the observer - we parted friends again.

GR group lesson 4

The group had to move into a smaller room for this lesson. Packed high with exercise books, cartridge paper and the like, there was precious

little space for the five clarinettists who stood shoulder to shoulder forming a straight line across the breadth of the room. The teacher managed to squeeze behind the students to look over their music. The observer had, by perforce, to sit alongside Natalie. Not perhaps the ideal vantage point but at least the subject was within earshot.

Natalie was asked if she had caught up with the others. She seemed doubtful but said she had tried. Following revision of the clarino register notes the group had learnt last lesson, an exercise including the new note A was begun which many of the group claimed they had already encountered in band. The girls played individually. Kate, decidedly unsettled, was fluent if flat; Karen had more basic difficulties, she could not make certain notes speak clearly. Jennifer, a strapping, above average-sized girl, characteristically blew louder than the rest but her sound was steamy and at times coarse. Standing next to the two Natalies, both small and willowy in stature - when playing the bells of their instruments fell just above their knees - Jennifer seemed especially self-conscious of the difference in heights and held her clarinet at the same level as the two smaller girls. Natalie J. seemed relaxed and assured. Her high notes were both secure and well-tuned. In the past three weeks she had always been quietly confident,but it was not until this lesson that she was noticeably more advanced than the others in terms of handling and control of the instrument.

The hard work and extra practice Natalie W. had undertaken during the week paid dividends. Although she was still elementary when compared with the rest of the group, in terms of her playing standard the previous week she had improved immensely. Covering the holes and pressing firmly on the keys of the instrument still proved her Achilles' heel.

Contradictively, whilst the gap narrowed between the weakest student and the rest, it could be said to have widened between the two girls of the same forename.

Before leaving the school I thanked the headmaster for his co-operation. Recalling our initial confrontation, there appeared little, if any, residual annoyance at the way he had been caught unawares. Thankfully, he had become progressively amicable in his dealings with me over the four-week period.

PL group lesson 1

The lesson was held in the staff room immediately following morning break. Surprisingly, the room was quiet and relatively free from outside distractions. On entering the room each child cast a distrusting glance at the observer. Whether or not they thought I ought to be marking examination scripts or catching up on paper work during their lesson, they appeared not unduly worried by my presence and clearly did not connect me in any way with the activity about to begin. After what appeared a quick tuning check, the observer can only assume that the main preliminary tuning took place during break, the group began by playing an Eta Cohen study in unison. Initially, there were play-throughs by the children interleaved by short explanations from the teacher on violin technique. At this stage the lesson followed a stereotyped skill learning pattern though an especially noticeable plus, perhaps because the children tended to play together rather than separately, were the seemingly infrequent stops and starts. By and large, rather than fragmenting the music into separate phrases or units, pieces were tackled in their entirety. Helped at troublesome moments by the teacher who played or sang alongside the children, the pieces were started, played

through and completed. But the real turning point of the lesson came when the emphasis on skill learning gave way to recognition of more musicianly qualities of structure and expressive character. The teacher made reference to 'bright, sunny major keys and sad minor ones', demonstrating by giving each child one note of a three-part chord. Treating it as a game the children were told to use their ears to tell which chord was which. Building on the same idea the teacher played tonic to dominant in both major and minor keys and after repeating the keynote and one of the other four notes, but carefully avoiding thirds, he asked at random one member of the group to identify the note either by letter, name or number (1-5). From there the major/minor component was added. Those notes of which members of the group were uncertain were repeated together with the tonic to reinforce the correct answer and consolidate their new learning. Only once when more rosin was applied to a bow, did the lesson lose momentum. This had seemed a productive session.

PL individual lesson 1

Just prior to the lesson there was a room change which involved the teacher walking from the entrance hall to a teaching room at the extreme opposite end of the building where Nicholas was waiting with instrument, music stand and tutor book in readiness. A tune up, a brief reminder from the teacher about the shape of the music, and Nicholas began to play. Again, the structure of the piece was discussed and then playing recommenced but this time he was asked to pay particular attention to tuning. Some of the notes he played sharp. After pointing this out the teacher played the suspect notes then asked Nicholas to sing them. Put out by the observer being present his discomfort was obvious. He sang timidly at first but in tune. Encouraged by a reassurance from the

teacher that this was not a singing lesson but that if he could sing the notes in tune his playing might become more tuneful, Nicholas tried playing again still erring but marginally less sharp. The student's bright yet serious manner and his frequent questions displayed a genuine interest.

PL group lesson 2

Whilst the children were tuning their violins a parent called for advice from the teacher and so the start of the lesson was slightly delayed. Unable to find his rosin, David was asked if he had left it at home. He recalled last time it went missing finding it in the attic.

The tallest of the three, David was asked to stand to the left of the others so as not to obscure the teacher's view of his group. The playing began with a folk song followed by scales. There were frequent wrong notes and more than a spot of doubtful intonation but at least the group kept going. 'Scales', said the teacher, 'should be bold' and he demonstrated what he meant. The group tried to imitate but progress was hard-earned. Once satisfied with the group's efforts the teacher attended in turn to individuals, starting with David who inadvertently was playing glissandi from one note to another. Explaining that each note should have a beginning and an end, that it had to be stopped before starting another, the teacher gave a further demonstration whilst David and the others looked on. Philip became bored and slumped down into one of the comfortable staff room chairs - they were just too inviting. In an attempt to rekindle Philip's enthusiasm and weld the group together again, the teacher, addressing the whole group whilst giving Philip a side-glance, asked if there were any scales in the music they were playing. The attempt was successful. Philip pointed to a scalic passage but

conceded that it was only part of a scale. Tacitly, the others agreed. As the music was marked 'flowing' they were told to use plenty of bow and once again they played together with the teacher encouraging them on by pointing to the notes and singing alongside. Philip played standing on one leg. Whilst making light of this the teacher made clear that violinist's ought to play with both feet firmly on the ground. Philip took the point. 'Is it the end of the lesson now', one of them asked impolitely. 'Almost', came a restrained reply.

The remaining few minutes were spent in revising the aural work covered last week. David and Luke had improved but Philip it seemed was simply not in the mood. Sharing impressions after the lesson, teacher and observer felt the group was listless and stolid.

PL individual lesson 2

Nicholas gave a competent account of The Dove though his first finger positions were slightly sharp. By and large the teacher was approving and, after drawing attention to the suspect notes, B and E, and correcting Nicholas's bow hold, he suggested moving on to Melody. Although using the same notes as before - within the compass D to D - the piece moves mostly in crotchets with the occasional pair of quavers. This was the first time Nicholas had encountered quavers notationally. After some examples and explanations relating quavers to the note values already known, an attempt: Nicholas's rendering of the piece, marred only by overreaching the first finger positions again, was rhythmically sensitive and accurate.

This Old Man contained groups of four quavers on the first five consecutive notes of a D major scale, as Nicholas pointed out. The phrase in question was isolated and worked on before twice attempting the piece all the way through. Playing in his school orchestra he had come across

two notes, top G and E, at present unknown to him and naturally he was anxious to find out how to play them. Armed with a copy of the part he asked for advice.

Using Nicholas's new-found knowledge the teacher played the quaver passage of Frère Jacques starting on the E string at a speed his pupil could manage. Nicholas followed suit repeating the passage several times. Only when the quavers had become smooth and reasonably in tune, did the teacher suggest taking the tune from the beginning. Further relating the new notes to aural work, the teacher played on his violin part of a Schubert piano piece (grade III aural) containing a similar phrase to the one they had played. Nicholas was asked to identify the time of the music. Replying 'three time' he sounded unsure and the teacher kept back the answer until Nicholas consolidated his reply. After beating time whilst the teacher played, again Nicholas proffered three time and the teacher smiled. Another time test by the same composer but in duple time rounded off the lesson. Prior to packing away Nicholas looked at the teacher's aural book - essentially written for piano. Being used to reading only one line of music he was puzzled by the chords and he asked whether they could be played on the violin. The teacher illustrated his answer by triple and double stopping but making clear that the particular music concerned was written not for violin but for piano. Such special effects as double, triple stopping and spiccato,he added, could be played only by those who did not 'stick their thumb through the bow.'

PL group lesson 3

There were only two music stands in the staff room, Philip and David shared one, Luke and the teacher the other. Luke had forgotten to bring

his violin so had to borrow another half-size instrument. The group began playing a French folk song, The bells of Vendôme, as a round. Philip and David started followed by Luke and the teacher who pointed to the music and counted the beats aloud - keeping time was the main problem. On the whole Luke adapted quickly to the unfamiliar instrument though he tended to bow heavily, sometimes applying excessive weight with the result that the sound grated at the beginnings of notes. They went on to play an exercise based on the scale of D; David lost his place. Again, Luke showed that, despite his lack of years, he was well up to the standard of the others.

The teacher asked the group, as if uncertain, for their ages. 'Ten, eight and a half' came the reply from Philip and David respectively. Luke proudly announced that he was seven and three quarters - it sounded like a hat size. Deliberating on their ages, the teacher emphasised that Luke, incidentally by far the smallest and the only one still wearing short trousers, was only a first year. Clearly, this was a calculated move to make Philip and David look to their laurels.

The group gelled in There is a happy land chosen ostensibly to practise playing third finger D in tune. Philip and David became more alert, at least temporarily, and some, if not all of the marks of expression were attempted. 'Luke,' said the teacher, 'was unkind to an F sharp'. In the penultimate bar he had played crotchet instead of minim. He was asked to repeat the phrase. The others smiled smugly and began talking while Luke played. They moved on to a study based on an arpeggio in the same key (D). After a brief yet colourful explanation of the term arpeggio - one which the group were unlikely to forget easily - Luke listened while the two older boys sight-read the piece. Philip, heron-

like again, became bumptious in front of Luke. Not for the first time in this lesson was the competitive spirit, to some extent implanted into the group by the teacher, aroused.

PL individual lesson 3

The lesson began with a performance of the newly-learnt Melody. Nicholas, underplaying some of the notes, C sharp in particular, was asked to listen more carefully and still wavering slightly, the intonation became sharper. He played Frère Jacques as a round with the teacher. The quavers, which Nicholas had apparently practised during the week, were up to speed if uneven. After several false starts the teacher explained the geography of the music, the contours, the matching bars, how one part would harmonically underpin another. Nicholas set out again, this time noticeably waiting for the second part to enter, and aside from the teacher having to slightly augment the third phrase, the rendering went without a hitch.

Sight reading proved to be Nicholas's forte. Not only did he keep going, in time, in key and relatively in tune, he played musically and on completing the exercise he pointed out scalic passages as he had done in the past. The piece was in duple time and whilst he knew what the upper figure (2) meant, he confessed to forgetting the reason for the lower figure (4). Again, his frequent questioning displayed a lively interest. He was asked to identify the metre of a number of tunes after they had been played by the teacher. Although many of the examples did not start on the beat Nicholas showed little doubt in sorting them into duple, triple and quadruple categories.

Continuing the aural work, he was asked to name, after the keynote had been sounded, a given note played supposedly within the range tonic to

dominant. For one of the tests the teacher gave the submediant! After some deliberation and prompting to have the courage of his conviction, Nicholas proffered questioningly, 'a sixth?' Subsequently, the compass was widened to a full octave.

Nicholas went on to tackle the middle line of a trio written in open score. The teacher explained that like the example with which he had concluded last lesson, this was a way of playing chords but instead of one player double and triple stopping, three players each played separate lines of music. Nicholas, immediately comprehending, looked at the piece anew. What, he asked digressing, did the dots underneath the notes mean? The details unfolded, there was a risk of side-tracking further so the teacher suggested they begin to play again. Running over time, the lesson finished with a romp through the now familiar This Old Man.

PL group lesson 4

The lesson scheduled for 10.50 was delayed again due to a talk, given by an outside speaker, running over time. At once the group seemed more cohesive. The underlying competitiveness of the previous week had all but vanished, so too the irritation the two older boys had displayed towards Luke. If anything the competitive element and conflict engineered last lesson seemed to have promoted rather than thwarted group cohesion.

After a corporate performance of The bells of Vendôme the teacher inveigled the boys into playing by themselves. Luke, this week using his own violin, played less confidently than before, as did David. Philip, oblivious to the activity around him, gazed in wonderment at the staffroom notice-board. Twice he lapsed into reveries. The first time he was roused back into action by the teacher informing him that it was his turn to play. On the second occasion he awoke to the sound of his violin

falling to the floor. This incident provoked a response from the whole group but especially so with Philip who, visibly shaken, instantly became alert and receptive. Apparently in school his reputation for dreaming time away was widespread.

The core of the lesson was spent in improving bowing technique, moving slowly from point to heel for the duration of dotted minims - this was the longest note they had played so far. Giving a potted account of the sixteenth-century composer Thomas Tallis, the teacher asked the group to sight read his Ordinal which contained dotted minims at the cadence points. With a reminder to play up-bows for up-beats, they began somewhat erratically. David, contrary to all the teacher had said about bowing slowly, ran out of bow at each long note. Enquiring whether they noticed if they had finished on a down bow, the teacher turned towards Luke. His bowing had been contrariwise to the others after the first cadence. They played again and this time the group bowed as one.

Twenty minutes into the lesson David asked his usual question of how much longer was there before the end. This must have taxed the teacher's patience beyond endurance but he soldiered on. Given that the weather had been particularly bleak and the children had had to remain indoors during break, their sluggishness was perhaps understandable.

The ensuing ten minutes were spent in recapping The Dove, scales and arpeggios. The teacher made some parting remarks about practising during the holidays. It was not by any means the most productive of the four lessons. If nothing else it served to point up the fickleness and inconsistency of children of that age-range.

PL individual lesson 4

The mother of the pupil before Nicholas asked if her daughter could

share the lesson with him as they had done some time ago. She said that they enjoyed being taught together. Explaining that until recently there had been considerable disparity in the standards of the players, the teacher expressed the hope that soon they would be able to join together again.

Nicholas was tuned and ready to play within seconds. There were consecutive play-throughs of This old man, Lightly row, and Frère Jacques. Though not absolutely in tune, he was mostly sharp on D, the performances were nevertheless well-portrayed and wholly convincing. What few remarks the teacher passed were more congratulatory than corrective. Again Frère Jacques was played as a round but it was still rhythmically insecure. Going on to explain that a famous composer had used this tune but set in a minor key and under its German title Bruder Martin, the teacher carefully avoided mention of Mahler or the 1st Symphony.

Although in the past few weeks Nicholas appeared hardly to notice the observer, this week he seemed particularly disturbed by my presence. Frequently he would turn to see if I were still watching him. If he answered a question incorrectly he would look askance as if he expected me to show disapproval, perhaps tut-tut.

Building on the aural work previously covered, the teacher extended the time signature examples to include compound in addition to simple metre. Consolidating the three notes newly learnt (l, t, d) the interval examples were played and answered quickly, though Nicholas found difficulty in identifying fifths. He was asked to imagine bold trumpet calls and helped by the teacher who gave clues by playing each fifth without vibrato,* Nicholas arrived at the correct answer, deduced

*The teacher usually played with vibrato as he believed that when playing to pupils it was vital to make the instrument sound as beautiful as possible.

no doubt more from the rendering that pointed up the trumpet call sound than from the interval itself.

To conclude they played a duet entitled The Steamroller. As explained by the teacher, who played the 'engine sounds', an alberti-type bass line, his pupil, supposedly 'getting up steam' held sustained pedal points. There were one or two moments of looseness - one beat and two beat rests in the pupil part were not always differentiated - but the piece provided an effective and enjoyable finish.

DB group lesson 1

What seemed like an inordinate amount of time was spent in setting up and in packing away. A school assembly in the adjacent hall severely restricted the only means of access to the teaching room, a small library. Teeming with five each of children outgoing, incoming, teacher and observer, bustle and commotion abounded. The observer's presence became something of a talking-point amongst the children possibly as one child recognised me as a neighbour - at least she thought she did. Conversation, whilst teacher was tuning violins and checking each practice book, turned swiftly from observer to television and on again to a comparison of bed times. Interaction was rife.

Violins tuned, the children formed a horseshoe pattern around three music stands and playing began in unison. This gave way to some antiphonal work, boys against girls, but despite being told to be ready the girls missed their cue. Group attention became more focused as parts were interchanged. Turn-taking, first girls then boys, separate phrases were allotted each sub-group. Only once when one of the girls was rightly accused of playing up to the observer, did Ben appear inattentive. Asked along with his friend to 'turn the page and play the same piece from

memory', Ben was quickly brought back from his momentary day-dream.

After further rummaging around, the children brought out new (grade 1) music and it was promptly put up for inspection. There was discussion of key and time signatures, followed by an impromptu performance given by the teacher - and watched eagerly by the group - of one of the new pieces. Undoubtedly enlivening the lesson, questions were raised about notation, dynamics and, especially noteworthy, the character of the music. Turning to the actual techniques of playing the piece, one member of the group was asked to name the part of the bow he was using. Silence. 'You know, you have one on your foot.' 'Toe?' he replied. 'Heel!' chorused the group.

Rounding off the lesson they played hurriedly through a well-known and well-learnt tune, which incorporated both bowing and pizzicato. The teacher wryly suggested 'coming' rather than 'racing round the mountain when she comes.' The lesson concluded with a wave of requests for notebooks to be brought up to date to include the new pieces. We seemed to have hastened through a great deal of material within a very short time. As the group left - still manifestly bewildered about my role - it was mooted I was there to inspect the violins. Whatever they thought, most were demonstrably restive throughout the lesson, and that was put down to my presence.

DB individual lesson 1

This lesson took place before school (8.00 am) in one of the borough music centres. The centre serves an area made up of a large, predominantly dormitory village and surrounding rural districts. John arrived accompanied by his mother who, sitting in on the lesson, handed over a practice sheet on which there were six ticks out of a possible seven - one for each day of the week. Both teacher and parent joined forces in

chiding John for his lack of daily practice and he vowed to mend his ways. Doubtless mindful of the onslaught he had just received, he began playing somewhat hesitantly with scales in preparation for his imminent grade 1 examination.

By the teacher playing alongside him, John was made aware of marked differences in intonation. 'Mine's a bit flat,' he remarked when asked, 'which way is it out of tune?' A period of imitative, careful playing and concentrated listening followed during which John's playing was brought closer to pitch. At times it was hard to decide whether the difficulties he was experiencing were manipulative, aural, or a combination of the two; indeed, time was spent in pursuit of both skills. Again he was asked, 'which way?' 'Flat,' he replied. It was sharp. Still, though declining further discourse, the teacher had gone to considerable lengths to improve John's intonation and he was making some headway - albeit slowly. A phrase in which John came unstuck, basically a sequential pattern starting d r m d, was separated. Relating this to Frère Jacques was but a short step, though one over which John pondered awhile, and what started out purely as manipulative skill learning was broadened to encompass recognition of musical line and structure.

Adopting the role of the bad violinist, in much the same way as Sheila Nelson does, with poor posture and playing position, the teacher asked 'put me right,' at which John proceeded to correct her faults one by one. The point made, John thought of his own stance and set about improving it - when he remembered. Constant reminders were given throughout the lesson: 'what have you to think about before starting? Think about your violin, bow arm and wrist,' but John seemed in a stupor - it was very early.

DB group lesson 2

Most of the children had been present at a school disco the evening preceding the observation. Throughout the morning the subject of the disco was a talking-point whenever one group changed places with another. This was an opportune moment to continue the socialising and with the exception of Stuart who was uncharacteristically subdued - due, the observer since discovered, to a family bereavement - the children recounted excitedly the previous nights' events. The teacher made a quip about violinists being excluded from all future discos as they interfered with the lessons. Considering this, the children smiled disbelievingly yet calmed down sufficiently to allow the teacher to tune their violins. A string replaced, adhesive coloured labels - to indicate finger positions - checked, practice books scrutinised and transgressors rebuked, the teacher heard the children en masse play through the examination piece they had begun the week before. They played with assurance and considerable progress was evident. The teacher discussed and illustrated how they might improve certain aspects but generally she seemed well-pleased with their efforts.

A question and answer session followed, involving everyone; it was a way of disseminating information speedily. Notional marks were awarded and there was good-humoured badinage between the opposing teams. Boys, though fewer in number, scored significantly higher than the girls amongst whom Jennifer was all but asleep - perhaps all her vitality had been expended at the disco. Questions were framed in such a way as to require from the children careful consideration of the music before them. It was as if guided by the teacher they were discovering the musical signs and terms for themselves. At one stage an antonym of crescendo was needed.

Hesitantly, Ben - more musically literate than the others - suggested 'decrescendo' but the group simply dismissed it. The teacher pointed out that Ben's answer was perfectly acceptable but that there was an alternative, more usual term. Phonetically she spelt out di-min-u-en-do,' and the group chanted it back at exactly the same slow pace.

Similarly, the members of the group arrived at an alternative way of fingering C sharp and it was not until the context of the phrase in which it occurred had been examined, that 'they' decided on using fourth finger. Of course, this is all very elementary and patently obvious to any experienced violinist, but to the group of children concerned it represented a discovery; they had been put in a position whereby they had arrived at an answer out of the learning experience structured by the teacher.

Interestingly, though very much a side issue, there was confusion over the word 'sharp'. Often the children would answer 'sharp' when they meant short - possibly as when playing short notes on the violin the movement of the teacher's bowing arm tended to be swift, indeed short and sharp.

DB individual lesson 2

Following a scale, John commenced working on his grade 1 pieces and as with the scale he took them at a speed faster than he could comfortably manage. Concomitantly, his bowing was short and he was constantly reminded to play long bow strokes. 'The more bow you use,' the teacher remarked, 'the more the instrument will sing', but playing dotted minims John ran out of bow. Again, he looked sleepy and his concentration and attention were irregular. His playing position needed constant correction, so much so that later when John's mother called to collect

him - this week she did not stay - the teacher expressed her concern and suggested purchasing a more substantial shoulder pad.

Sight-reading proved more successful. John was asked to imagine he was taking his exam and after completing his pieces, study and scales, he was shown a sight-reading test. Whilst looking over the piece John was asked to take account of any signs and directions marked, to work out intricate rhythms and, time permitting, finger through awkward passages. At this stage John became much more responsive and his grasp of Italian terms and rudiments was surprising. He made a gallant attempt at the sight-reading, perhaps a little too fast for comfort but the performance was expressive and in character with the march-like piece. If the speed was ill-chosen, it was not a stumbling-block. Although there was a slight hitch prior to a dotted crotchet quaver pattern, John kept going through to the end. Conversely, John was told when practising to break down a piece into small manageable units and only when those had been mastered should he weave them together again. In this respect, the skills of performance and practice are paradoxical: in practice it is necessary to stop and correct; in performance it is vital to keep going.

It seemed John's difficulties with concentration were not so much to do with the notational, nuts and bolts of music, but more with the co-ordinational aspects. His retention of terms and signs was well-developed, less so his concentration on physical matters. Afterwards in conversation with the observer the teacher thought the lesson to be stationary and less productive than usual. John, she reflected, appeared tired.

DB group lesson 3

Ben's mother was present at this lesson though Ben seemed to have

little to do with her and since she spent the opening few minutes talking with Jenny, the observer assumed the visiting parent to be Jenny's mother. It was not until after the lesson that the teacher explained otherwise. Interestingly, both subjects, John individually-taught and Ben from the group, had at one stage their mothers present during the lessons - that to some extent shows a fairly equivalent, parallel degree of parental involvement.

Forming an orderly queue, the children waited patiently to have their notebooks checked and their violins tuned. On one violin the finger position spots had become discoloured with use. The teacher, noticing this thought they were no longer necessary but the player insisted the spots were replaced - possibly, as she wanted one of each colour, more from a decorative viewpoint than as a guide to playing in tune.

Semitones were explained, in particular B flat to B natural, and the group commenced playing a slow ascending and descending chromatic exercise from String Builder. One by one, starting with Angela, the children repeated the study at a more reduced tempo, paying especial attention to tuning each note. Jill was accused of wearing her finger nails too long, clearly an absolute anathema to the teacher. As if it constituted a personal affront there was a slight uneasiness exacerbated, no doubt, by the presence of a parent: a safer terrain had to be sought. The teacher made an apposite pun subtly pointing out that no one with long finger nails could possibly play well and the incident was passed off in a good-natured way.

From semitones they moved on to 'whole steps.' To convey the information there was a question and answer session again, during which the teacher stuck dutifully to questions instead of answers - those came

largely from the group. During this session the group became especially industrious and work-orientated. Ben picked up questions that the girls had declined. The word 'chromatic' - which Stuart claimed he misheard as 'chronic' - was introduced, spelt out, illustrated by sound and symbol, and by use of onomatopoeic words: 'slithering' and 'creepy'. From the aural and visual they turned to the tactual. They were asked if they knew what half-tone steps felt like. Each in turn fingered a chromatic sequence, the atmosphere was intense. The lesson had turned full-circle, it had been a multiform experience, concentrated and powerful. Relaxing again they played through Free from Care. 'Make it sound like pretty flowers,' said the teacher, 'not like cacti, Stuart.'

DB individual lesson 3

John's mother, sister and younger brother stayed for the lesson so along with teacher and observer, John had a modest-sized audience. Relating how after she had tried in vain to purchase another shoulder pad, John's mother had thoughtfully repadded the existing one as a temporary measure. With a reminder from the teacher about stance, to hold the violin up and to keep the wrist down, John revised his examination scales starting with D major. His playing was lumpy and the intonation left much to be desired. Aptly described by the teacher as 'an early morning scale', John was made to repeat the exercise. Still more attention was given to playing each note in tune; it had mixed results. He was prompted to 'make a bridge across the string' and again to keep his wrist down. Playing alongside the teacher provided a model against which John could measure the discrepancies in pitch. John admitted to being flat but seemed at a loss as to how to render better intonation. They changed scales from D to G and carelessly, John played

a C sharp - he appeared not to realise. Playing by herself, the teacher copied his mistake and enquired if there were any wrong notes. John thought for a moment. 'Was there anything wrong?' the teacher asked, urging a decision. John gave an affirmative reply. Something was amiss but exactly what he was unsure. She repeated the scale this time placing undue emphasis on the C sharp. For what seemed eons John pored over the passage. At last he twigged. After re-establishing the key signature he began once more. In terms of progress, the lesson appeared to be going nowhere quickly - indeed, seconds later the teacher expressed much the same point. Concentration was at a premium.

A change of direction: a competent rendering of Shepherd's Boy - somewhat forlorn it seemed. John was further reminded to stand up straight: 'like a soldier.' Playing through another grade 1 piece, John stumbled over a quaver passage expressly given for homework the previous week. The quaver passage was isolated, worked on and repeated countless times. At almost each third consecutive play-through the quaver passage came unstuck and thereafter steadily deteriorated still further. He stopped awhile then re-started with considerable improvement in results, thus giving credence to what is referred to in psychological terms as 'reminiscence.' The only concern here was that having practised it incorrectly so many times, it is conceivable that his mistakes might have become habitual, though in point of fact this was not the case. However, it was necessary for the teacher to constantly draw attention to posture and playing position: at one point John veered toward the heron-like stance adopted by another earlier; indeed, John stood improperly from force of habit. For the second week in succession the teacher expressed her concern to John's mother, complaining of his apparent lack of

retention, of not concentrating when being spoken to, of not standing up and of allowing the violin to slip lower and lower. She concluded that no significant progress had been made within the last fortnight.

DB group lesson 4

Jennifer's mother was present during the lesson. Apart from remaining to talk with the teacher afterwards, her presence seemed hardly noticed by the group. This was something of a compendium of past lessons. The content included attention to posture, playing from memory, alternative fingering and revision of terms and signs. Clearly this was a time to enumerate and consolidate the work covered prior to the half term holiday.

Positioning themselves ready to play, some held their violins incorrectly. As she had some weeks ago, the teacher made a point of adopting the same poor playing position. Drawing attention to this, she asked them what was wrong. In the process of correcting the teacher the children set about amending their own stance and posture.

They played from memory no fewer than three times, not only scales and arpeggios but whole pieces sometimes antiphonally, boys answering girls. Ben appeared to play with ease as he had done throughout the period of observation. There was good ensemble and balance between the two separate instrumental choirs.

At one point in the music they were asked why they ought not to use the fourth finger for D. Ben replied, 'because it has nought underneath it.' Though patently correct this was not the answer the teacher was seeking. Ben, however, would not be drawn further. The children were asked to look again at the piece but despite formerly being able to see music in terms of phrase and context, this week they had to be led all the way. Having said that they were far from being inattentive, indeed their

attention was strongly focused throughout the lesson, what was missing, however, and had been abundant last lesson was a sense of initiative.

To conclude: a question and answer session. Again they were asked for a term contrary to crescendo. A moment of uncertainty ensued, it was on the tips of their tongues . . . 'Does it begin with D?' someone asked. Momentarily their memories had deserted them. Only Ben remembered, 'di-min-u-en-do.'

Postscript

In conversation with the teacher in what had become a weekly post-lesson review, the question arose vis-à-vis the start of lessons, as to who had priority, the individual in need of some personal attention, or the non-learning total group. The teacher expressed concern for spending what she regarded as a disproportionate amount of time with each child; tuning the violin, checking the practice sheet and writing in his or her notebook. It was felt, however, that through this dyadic contact she could relate pastorally to the children. Indeed, seeing her work over the four-week period, the few moments she spent with each child at the beginning of the lessons seemed effectively to prevent feelings of distance which might otherwise have occurred. These were not private conversations, many of the points discussed though directed toward the individual concerned, had repercussions for the whole group and the teacher made every effort to bring in the others whenever appropriate. Knowledge of the individuals comprising the group is after all a way of coming to know both the group as a whole and the relationship of the individual to the group.

DB individual lesson 4

The shoulder pad problem had still to be resolved. The make

recommended by the teacher was apparently unavailable so another moulded type was suggested instead. John, accompanied this week by his father, had completed only five practices but was absolved as the family had been away for the weekend. With his father present John seemed more alert. Commencing with an A major scale he played confidently though a little under tempo. Suggesting he play to a marching rhythm the teacher demonstrated.* John copied the example and there was significant improvement. Generally his intonation was better though first and second finger positions were still marginally flat. In many ways it was hard to believe one was listening to the same pupil. All the angst and uneasiness was gone. He was brighter mentally and physically more co-ordinated. Questions were answered quickly, if laconically, and he gave sustained attention to correcting his playing position. Only once when there was some confusion over whether to play E open string or fourth finger, did the lesson lose momentum and John revert back to what the teacher described as 'automatic pilot'.

John's main problem seemed that he was not especially rhythmic. To what extent this was bound up with his lack of co-ordination is a matter for conjecture. Much of the lesson, however, was spent in pursuit of rhythmic skill. Fundamentally, he was told not to start without having set the speed in his head. If he had done this then evidently it did not transfer to his playing. He lacked sheer rhythmic discipline. Deploying another tactic the teacher suggested a more visible indicator of pulse and John was asked to tap his foot, or rather his 'toe inside his shoe'. Counting himself in he began again but stopped tapping when he started to play and the pulse became unsettled again. Only when the teacher played

*The teacher made a point of playing without vibrato as she liked the children to hear a sound that they too could produce.

alongside did he grasp any real sense of pulse. His unsteadiness rhythmically extended as far as basic note values. Often he would 'clip' notes, dotted crotchet quaver patterns were especially perplexing and minims were frequently stopped long before the end of the second beat. Here the teacher made effective use of metaphor, plainly a characteristic of her approach. John was asked to imagine a ruler marked in centimetres. One centimetre, it was explained, was not the first digit indicated but the distance between that and the next. Turning from the tangible to the abstract, the teacher added that notes too had distances or lengths. John grasped it in one.

'This is the exam,' the teacher announced minutes before the end. John played his two pieces. 'Almost perfect,' the teacher said hearteningly, 'now you've proved to me that you can concentrate.'

Chapter Eight

Analysis

The following applies analytical thinking to the foregoing series of lessons. Briefly, it

(i) comments on where the two types of lesson differed

(ii) notes activities which went especially well

(iii) compares the data elicited from the pro formas with what actually happened as documented by the case study typescripts

(iv) assesses how the observation matched with the hypotheses

(v) draws attention to noteworthy unexpected outcomes

Additionally, questions are raised as to the validity of the criteria for pairing the subjects; whether teacher subjects were making concerted efforts to modify their approaches according to group or individual situations, or simply deliberately adopting one teaching strategy across both types of lesson. The evidence on which to judge a lesson to be more or less successful than another is called into question, and there is also the matter, already mentioned, of inherent observer bias. Indeed, there are many variables; instrumental lessons take place often in less than ideal circumstances. It would be neither desirable nor feasible to control the lessons to laboratory conditions. On-the-spot observation of pupils and teachers in existing situations - without setting up artificial conditions - cannot hope to achieve the sterility of experimental research. In this study, matching the students was left to the teacher, the person best placed to make decisions on their pupils' levels of ability; teachers were asked for their immediate response to the success or failure of their lessons; as a secondary measure they read and amended where necessary the typescripts of their lessons. This

made possible an observation of pupils and teachers as individuals, an understanding of the relationships between them and an awareness of some of the influences to which they were subjected.

Once we begin to develop an enthusiasm for a certain approach to the teaching of our subject, as every active teacher does, it becomes rather too easy to dismiss other valid approaches as worthless and not to bother to look at them criticially and impartially. There is a tendency to see what we want to see instead of what is actually there. The observer had to distance himself from the subjects sufficiently to remain impartial, to evaluate the efficacy of different approaches, yet at the same time remain receptive to the subtle interplay of personalities, recognise relationships and social sharing which occurred in both types of lesson. What follows then, it should be stressed, is an interpretation of a particular sequence of individual and group lessons. As a further back-up measure, the case study typescripts remain intact to allow the reader to judge the implications and reinterpret the material for himself. The sheer number of themes the observation throws up could only be satisfactorily thought through in a much lengthier report focusing solely on field study data. Though many of these themes are potentially interesting they illustrate a general practical problem posed by case study technique - namely the process of organising the data. It is therefore in the interests of clarity and economy to draw up the issues especially related to points made earlier by the fourteen interviewees. Since an interpretation of the typescripts is necessary to elucidate and support the data gathered by means of the pro formas, there is a strong case for starting with it.

The overwhelming impression on reading the case study typescripts was

that one was not so much surprised by the differences as by the similarities. For one thing, there were successful and unsuccessful examples of both types of lesson; each had some advantages and disadvantages. For another, there were outstanding and indifferent examples of practice often within the same lesson. Moreover, success was not dependent only on the skill of the teacher to play the roles of motivator, questioner and consultant; there were other factors not least the attitudes of the pupils concerned. Thus before assessing the ways in which group and individual lessons differed, it might be helpful first to itemise the features that characterised outstanding lessons. The requirements for 'success' are hard to pin down but the following were common to both group and individual situations:

(a) active as distinct from passive participation (both musical and spoken)

(b) intelligent receptive listening

(c) interactive as opposed to assertive dialogue between either pupil and teacher, or pupil and pupil

(d) a sense of discovery and some measure of initiative on the part of the pupils

(e) recognition of musicianly qualities: interpretation, phrasing and musical line

(f) a 'circus' of activities: sequenced and progressive

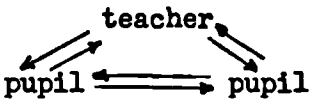
(g) information brought alive to pupils not merely paraded before them

Of course many of the above features relate directly to teaching technique and strategy. In particular, items (d) and (g) often involved the teacher in reformulating his questions, taking the trouble to phrase

them in an open-ended manner. Not 'pseudo' questions for which replies can only be close-ended, but questions designed and phrased to elicit a number of alternative answers. It was often in exploring each of the alternatives that much of the real learning took place.

The differences in the two types of lessons were basically three-fold. Firstly, in a dyadic situation, the roles of giver and receiver were clearly defined. In a group, whilst it may still be argued that the teacher is a 'keeper of knowledge', the opportunity exists of collaborative learning, of pooling resources. In short, of using his knowledge as a resource. He might adopt what may be described as a consultancy role. In this way he is relieved of constantly being the ideas man. Often in the one-to-one situation - John's violin lesson perhaps being the classic example - the degree of teacher activity seemed in inverse proportion to the extent of pupil activity. Even in a one-to-one lesson it is surely legitimate to induce the pupil to take some of the initiative. In groups there is a devolution of the leadership role to the members themselves. Some of the most fruitful lessons occurred when the teacher played down the role of leader. Again, this can be most clearly seen in the contrasts in teacher approach between the two violin lessons of John and Ben. Of course playing down the leadership role requires discipline from the group. They must be aware of the ground rules of appropriate behaviour; only then are they able to make the transition from learning received knowledge to experiencing exploratory learning. Secondly, the lessons differed in the kinds of task set by the teacher. Some were essentially more suited to a group response, others were better dealt with in the individual situation. Notable group lessons were those in which the teacher drew on the diversity of the

group. Notable individual lessons were those whereby the initiative remained with the pupil - though this could equally be claimed as a feature of the successful group lesson. Thirdly, the lessons differed in the kinds of learning transactions that occurred and in the overall interactive pattern. At the risk of oversimplification in one situation there is at best a two-way interactional process, in the other, a trinity of interactions:



Accordingly, the sorts of activities which in groups went especially well were those whereby the participants pooled their ideas, when they were told to 'put on their thinking caps' perhaps decided how best to improve a performance, to correct the teacher's 'bad violinist' posture, or to act as constructive critics in the manner the clarinettists' adopted; to reiterate, when the teacher drew on the diversity of group response. The sharing out of tasks was an effective use of group activity. Instances ranged from the elementary, allocating one note of a chord to each member with the intention of demonstrating distinctive major and minor chords; to the more complex antiphonal, round and canonic playing. Telling use was made of modelling: providing examples of playing posture, of phrasing, of patterning a rhythm which others copied. Imitation and emulation are cogent forces in group process.

Productive activity maintained group focus; even though the teacher may have been attending to a single child, the rest were involved. This was most apparent in the brass lesson in which the focus of attention shifted onto the weakest pupil, who derived benefit from the others joining in the simple exercise with which she was struggling. Their assistance was perhaps more consolatory than practical but it stemmed

from an awareness that everyone has at sometime the same sorts of problems - the children were learning vicariously. Focusing the activity is a group teaching technique. At this point it would be unfair and would renege the trust of those concerned to cite from the case studies a less than successful example. The typescripts are not intended to reproach anyone, least of all the teacher. Consider then, the following hypothetical observations:

Prior to playing the teacher announced that they would finger through the notes they had encountered for the first time the previous week. Turning to the pupil on his left he pointed at the first note and asked how should it be fingered. Without speaking the pupil demonstrated the correct position. Responding 'Good' the teacher moved down the line to the next pupil and the question was put again. This procedure continued until each one had answered.

In another lesson, the teacher addressed the group en masse and asked 'Who can tell me the fingering for the first note?' By pausing before choosing at random someone to answer, the teacher created an atmosphere of anticipation. After accepting the correct answer, the teacher looked around the group suspensively and asked, 'Now, who can tell me how we play the second note?'

The examples, comprising similar content, serve to show two types of teaching: the first, in which the order of the childrens' replies was predetermined, was essentially one-to-one teaching within a group; the second involved all the children and as they could not predict who was to be asked next, the children remained alert. The former begs the question, what were the others supposed to be doing whilst one person was being attended to? In the same way the question could be addressed to

the realities of every group teaching situation; what are the rest to do by way of participation when another is performing? Group focus occurs along a continuum over the total length of the lesson; thus the tendency is to spend the majority of time in concurrent activities: massed, unison playing. However, the most productive lessons were those whereby 'listeners' were called on in connection with what the performers were doing. In one of the group violin lessons it was not until parts were interchanged, separate phrases given to sub-groups, that the whole group became focused; the children had to listen in order not to miss their cues. But as well as engaging in some kind of concurrent performance, be it part playing or whatever, often the rest of a group were given specific points to listen for, to observe, to locate or recognise in the music, which later they were questioned about. The teacher's deliberate ploy to rekindle Philip's waning interest in the group violin lesson, by asking him to search out some small detail in the piece, was just such a move. It was, nonetheless, a ploy that could not be played to excess.

Of course active participation becomes logistically difficult when pupils forget to bring their tutor books. Participation may also be a problem for those pupils who fall behind the majority of their peers. However, the following were some of the procedures used by teachers in the case studies to involve all their pupils at the same time:

(i) pupils played en masse in unison or in several parts

(ii) each pupil took turns in performing alone and in listening and observing with others

(iii) pupils were assigned to a sub-group which in turn performed, listened and observed together

(iv) less advanced pupils were given easier parts which could

be performed with the rest of the group's more advanced pieces

(v) non-performing pupils were directed to make the correct motions,ie: to finger, bow in the air, etc.,as the other pupils played

(vi) non-performing pupils called out fingerings, note names, counted beats, etc.,whilst the rest played

(vii) when individuals performed by themselves or together in sub-groups the others were asked to listen with a view to commenting on how the performance had measured up to stated criteria

Although it was not easy to assess what the children were learning indirectly, it was the chance occurrences, the serendipitous events that remained in the observer's memory. The accident with the trumpet in the first observation, springs readily to mind. John learnt a valuable lesson; of that there was ample evidence the following week, but so too had his friend. Though for the most part the content of the lessons was progressive, built on the work of previous lessons, teachers and pupils were observed making lateral as well as sequential links. One teacher in particular related material and made connections - some more spurious than others - wherever possible; thus aptly demonstrating that seemingly separate areas of knowledge were, in fact, inextricably linked. It is a contradiction then to compartmentalise - to teach as if performance and 'theory' were separate, unrelated subjects. Another teacher gave her students an insightful, conceptual understanding of the word 'chromatic' by having them approach it through three of the five senses and further illustrated by expressive word use. These are simply illustrations of

some of the ways, direct and indirect, in which the learning experiences were being widened or more precisely given depth. Some of these are applicable to both individual and group instruction; others such as making discoveries by accident are, by the sheer number of pupils present, more likely to arise in groups.

Taken separately the two sources of data, case study and pro forma, may be compared. Taken together the data might be used to collate qualitative and quantitative differences between the two types of lesson. There were many aspects left unrecorded by the pro formas which came to light in the case study typescripts. Conversely, case study data might sometimes have given a false impression of the degree of time and activity comprising any one lesson. Reference to pro forma data helps put this into perspective. Moreover, combining the data provides both an account of the subjects' actions and an interpretation of some of the discernible reasons behind them.

Returning to the hypotheses drawn from the fourteen practitioners in the field, those relating to instrumental activity were stated as follows:

(i) It is possible to involve all the students to the greatest part of the total lesson time

(ii) Whilst much of the lesson time is spent acquiring skills, group-taught students spend more time, compared with individually-taught students, in musicianship

The nine comparisons between the percentages revealed in Table 1 (p.369) were statistically significant. Thus the first hypothesis was accepted at $p \leq .01$ level (rho .89). Comparatively small amounts of time were spent in off-task and more moderate amounts of time in setting up and packing away categories though, as might be supposed, group-taught students spent more time in the second of

these categories than did individually-taught students. More surprising perhaps is that individual and group-taught students received more or less the same spread of time to the various aspects of learning in music(p.370).

The second hypothesis was rejected. Whilst the majority of time was spent in acquisition of skills, group-taught students did not spend more lesson time compared with individually-taught students, in musicianship. There were only minimal differences between the two.

The hypotheses relating to student observation were:

(iii) The paradox of group work would seem to be that it meets the needs of the individual in at least three areas: in the acquisition of skill, information and musicianship

(iv) The cohesiveness of groups seems to suggest acculturation, adoption of the values of the group by the individuals, in tandem with high levels of commitment and emulation/imitation

(v) Group teaching enables a wider range of skills to be taught than would be the case in an individual lesson

At a descriptive level the paradox of group work, that it meets the needs of the individual, would seem to be borne out. From the data elicited by means of the pro formas - as can be seen by the differences in the scores in Table 2 (p.371) - subjects receiving group tuition scored higher on all six variables observed than did subjects who received individual tuition. These variables included: acquisition of skills comprising, (i) aural discrimination (at $p \leq .05$ level), (ii) manipulative ($p \leq .05$ level), and (iii) fluency of notation ($p \leq .05$ level); information comprising technical vocabulary (not significant)* and musicianship, comprising

*The historical and social perspectives category due to insufficient instances was barely discernible and was subsequently omitted from the pro forma.

(i) structure ($p \leq .05$ level) and (ii) expressive character (not significant). In short, group tuition developed musical learning at least to the extent of individual tuition; in fact, beyond it.

Circumstantial evidence of acculturation, adoption of the values of the group by the individuals, is clear from the case study typescripts. The comparisons revealed in the scores, in Table 3, (p.372) show no significant difference in levels of commitment but there are gains towards group tuition in emulation/imitation at $p \leq .001$ level.

Case study data of groups evidenced a wide range of skills. The following three instances are given: the skill developed from playing together of maintaining a steady pulse and avoiding hesitation, in turn forcing co-ordination of hand and eye; the skill of quick response which came from a sense of healthy competitiveness, rivalry and group spirit evident in the challenging question and answer sessions; the skill and confidence of playing before a critical audience either as a soloist, duettist or as a member of an ensemble. Additionally the pro formas revealed a high degree of peer assessment (5.45; mean of conflated 7-point scale) together with more moderate levels of competitiveness (3.06) and co-operativeness (4.70). It is important to note that these were not statistically tested, and consequently they should be taken as suggested rather than conclusive.

The hypotheses relating to teacher observation were:

(vi) A group approach requires higher levels of preparedness, interaction, awareness of individuals and personal dynamism

(vii) In a group approach there is more emphasis on heuristic, or discovery learning than on direct instruction

(viii) Whilst a sense of social unity is requisite for the running of a group, the teacher's awareness of an individual within

a group is at least comparable to his awareness of a subject taught individually

The comparisons between the percentages in Table 4 (p.373) revealed positive gains toward group teaching in preparedness, interaction and personal dynamism. There were similar gains in the items of heuristic or discovery learning and awareness of individuals. The twenty comparisons relative to teacher observation were statistically significant. Thus hypotheses six, seven and eight were accepted at $p \leq .01$ level.

The scores revealed that the teachers behaved in a similar way in both group and individual settings. However, the level of the scores is lower for individual lessons than for group lessons. This can be seen more clearly in diagram form (p.374). Although there were gains towards group teaching in all twenty comparisons - largely to be expected since these were the points postulated in the group teachers' transcripted interviews - the greatest differences were found in spontaneity; discovery or heuristic learning; and enjoyment (each at $p \leq .01$ level).

In a group lesson there is a need for greater spontaneity on the teacher's part, as when several players are present it is less easy to control the format of the lesson. Graham Owen's contention of group teaching being a 'flexible arrangement, not set' or Phyllis Palmer's of a 'set pattern' from which she continually departs, would seem not misconceived.

An atmosphere of discovery is harder to create in a one-to-one setting. There is no one to share the sense of discovery. It seems that the teacher knows all the answers; he 'sends' out the information whilst the student passively 'receives' it. A temptation in an individual lesson is to ask direct questions and not to do as Yvonne Enoch does when teaching

groups, to re-phrase questions so that there is a feeling of working to discover knowledge rather than the sense of it being given away gratuitously. Apropos of that there were relatively large differences, if not correspondingly so, in the comparison of positive atmosphere of anticipation.

Ostensibly the enjoyment gained from playing with others, of shared pleasure, would seem to carry through to the teacher, but then enjoyment is more easily discernible in a group setting. The level of enjoyment may be just as high in an individual lesson but of a different sort, inward and self-contained.

The smallest differences between the two scores can be seen in the items time and consistency; in both group and individual settings the teachers were efficient users of time and consistent. Most striking of the moderately small differences between the two scores is perhaps in the repetition item. Whilst it may be legitimate to repeat things more often in a group setting, the teachers observed did not do so to the extent that might be conjectured.

In addition to comparing each variable, teacher observation scores were computed across all twenty constructs. The subject with the highest percentage in terms of group teaching was shown to be DB (Table 5 p.375), and PL in terms of individual teaching. Interestingly, the latter's score was exactly the same in both instances; indeed, he claimed to be equally at ease in either situation.

If the scores appear high then the reasons for this are two-fold; firstly, a reminder is given that part of the criteria for choosing the teacher subjects was that they should be considered successful in both individual and group teaching situations; secondly, each of the

constructs was drawn from the interviews given by established group teachers - they were, in short, viewed on their terms. Just as their views were reforged into constructs, the hypotheses, later mostly confirmed, developed from the same source. It was anticipated, though, that in group lessons a greater proportion of time would be spent in musicianship. The periods of time spent in musicianship in both individual and group settings seem disturbingly short. Surely this need not be inevitable; as teachers we could give greater attention to musicianship. In point of fact, overall there was marginally less time spent in this category in group than in individual lessons. However, the learning outcomes, exceeding expectations, did not reflect the relative parity of the time factors and showed a positive gain towards groups in musicianship. It was concluded that this was due to the built-in opportunity for ensemble work, of the necessity when playing as a group, for careful listening. Attending to how others phrase, to their tone colour and musical nuance,can provide a model and an incentive for self-improvement in musicianship.

The incentive for self-improvement can, however, be dependent on the material, its appropriateness and attractiveness. It was shown by the example of the clarinet lesson in which no one had practised the lower line of a two-part piece, that material was more readily learnt if it fitted in with the pupils' preferences. How then does the teacher ensure that the group as a whole learns what needs to be learned? Constant repetition is one of the ways favoured by some teachers but it can become a dreary mode of proceeding. Indeed, it is hard for any teacher to maintain an even tone of involvement whilst an individual or group goes through endlessly repetitive routines. That said, teachers are more

likely to avoid making repetitive statements in a group setting thus saving much instructional time. This, coupled with the possibility of learning from others could account for the alacrity with which group-taught students acquired notational skills. In groups the time spent in acquiring notational skills seems relatively low whereas the level of achievement in this category is high. This suggests a substantial increase in efficiency. One of the violin teachers took time at the end of each lesson, whilst notebooks were being brought up to date and violins cleaned, to reinforce the work they had covered in addition to giving reminders of how and what to practise. These summaries were delivered in a way that pointed up the spiral, progressive nature of the subject; the same skills were tackled at increasingly higher levels.

Valuable though these summaries were in the group lesson, constant repetition could equally be a feature of one-to-one lessons. What is unique in a group is the social context. The atmosphere within the group is qualitatively different from the one-to-one lesson and can become a potent learning experience. Participants may learn through someone else's misfortunes - the saxophone reed incident was a case in point and making light of it made it all the more memorable. They may learn through recalling an atmosphere of intense concentration, as when the trumpeters played their own compositions,or they may learn by observing the teacher's solutions to problems other than their own - there were countless opportunities for this. In all the cases above there were repercussions for the whole group. The recall of atmosphere is always selective, at best we are left with a conceptual understanding of what occurred rather than a detailed knowledge, but uppermost are the things we did and learnt along with other people. Kenneth van Barthold has

vivid memories of specific moments in the classes he attended at the Paris Conservatoire twenty years ago. Thus the social context would seem to be the nub of the matter: that given within a group an atmosphere conducive to learning,the participants will retain something of it years after the event. That, Kenneth van Barthold believes, privately-taught students can never do. According to his view, it is the interaction and interdependence of the members of a group which operate as a spur to learning. Participants digest their group experience and organise it cognitively. They have a strong incentive to retain the experience as each member wants to keep up with the rest.

In any successful lesson there is a high value placed on activity. In an individual lesson much of the pupil's time will be spent playing, in a group this may not be the case. As shown by the typescripts, whilst one pupil was playing there was more for others to do than merely take a non-participatory ringside seat. Yet some pupils appeared to be, if not excluded from, then certainly on the fringes of the activity. In Jenny's case, being the only girl in the group, it was easy to deduce why she was regarded as an outsider. Overtly, the crystallization of solidarity within the group came only after Jenny had impressed the boys with her composition though there were signs the group had gelled prior to that lesson.

If the discipline of music helps to teach teamwork and individual responsibility within a group, whether the group is a band, orchestra or ensemble, all well and good but the same must surely be said of other disciplines involving groups of people - it is hard to conceive of one that would not. In the main, with the exception of the lesson in which the teacher deliberately introduced a degree of competitiveness,

co-operation and competition co-existed peacefully. The pupils showed independency from the teacher; when separately the trumpeters gave performances of their respective pieces there was real dialogue between them on how music which is sung and recorded differs from the printed copy. There were also examples of interdependency, the pairing up of the clarinettists to provide moral support. The only source of moral support in the individual lesson is the teacher. Isolating, as it does, the pupil from other pupils, the individual lesson can provide little in the way of a gauge by which the pupil can assess how he is faring. Paul, the baritone pupil, felt a failure and wanted to give up. If he had heard others struggling with the same problem he would have had a frame of reference by which to measure his progress. Later,a group might well have encouraged him to achieve standards he would hardly have thought of himself.

Sometimes, however, the momentum engendered in a group is such that it is difficult to direct, so much so that it can become a decided disadvantage: Phyllis Palmer's piano group would play progressively faster and faster; Graham Owen complained of his group clarinet pupils haring through slow and sombre folk songs; from the case studies the wry comment of 'racing round the mountains' said it all. Once children, though one would suppose the same could equally be said of adults, master a pattern of fingering the natural reaction is not to use their new-found skill to play sensitively and musically,but instead to show off and demonstrate how quickly they can play the passage.

In any practice-based study using situations that readily exist, the demand for neat answers,'recipes for action', is almost overwhelming. There is not one approach to group or individual teaching but various

approaches. Rather than a single right/wrong dichotomy the possible advantages of one have to be offset against the possible disadvantages of another. There is much work to be done in a diagnostic way, to identify good practice, to reflect on it and to relate it to other people working in the same field. The analysis took a pragmatic view: here were four successful teachers working, on the one hand with individuals, on the other with groups. It itemised the areas of common ground, the features that characterised outstanding lessons, it compared the differences between the types of lessons of approach and response, it identified procedures and strategies for encouraging active participation; it compared illuminative case study data with that elicited by more systematic means, and it considered some of the ways group-taught students learn other than by direct instruction. We arrive then at a short statement which encapsulates the observational findings:

> We can say that group lessons are a viable approach to music instruction; many of the advantages would seem to stem from the social interaction inherent in the group setting that purports to provide an ambience conducive to the learning processes. It differs from one-to-one instruction in at least three ways: in the opportunity it affords for collaborative learning, which can be a catalyst to rapid progress; in the sorts of learning transactions that occur; and in the kinds of tasks set by the teacher. The learning outcomes can match those of individual instruction in the acquisition of skill, information and musicianship.

The first two parts of this thesis are concerned with principles and procedures. If the present study is to have professional implications, it is necessary to take an overview, indicating the place of instrumental group work within the total curriculum and look at its viability in terms of existing resources. Those two lines of enquiry are the subject of the concluding stage.

Chapter Nine

9.1 The viability of group work in terms of existing resources

Based on the group teaching premise the following will seek to assess the viability of group work in terms of maximising, reconstituting or refurbishing existing resources and with regard to personnel - the most precious resource. It will view the development of instrumental experience as a sine qua non of the music curriculum, thus legitimate within the timetable; consider the administration and organisation of instrumental groups, lessons and rehearsals in schools; and suggest and bring into focus, possible lines of approach, some of which cherish, others that change, the present schemes. Group instruction ensures that we can reach larger numbers of students more effectively, the scope and possibilities have hitherto only ever been glimpsed. In addition to suggestions of a broader base for more students to gain experience of playing instruments, it is hoped that the present section will stimulate thinking on the part of general classroom music teachers and peripatetics for the development of alternatives to pupil withdrawal for instrumental lessons, and that they will also consider the possibilities of including within the curriculum what are commonly referred to as extra-curricular - but more precisely are extra-timetabled rehearsals; it is important to distinguish between the two. The term extra-curricular is a misnomer, at best it has a rather restricted meaning. It implies leisure-time activities of secondary importance to curricular work, and not worthy of a place on the school timetable. Even by this reading of the term, it is hardly extra-curricular to the work of a music department but vital to the needs of its students. Tagged on to what are commonly overfull days, so-called

extra-curricular activities make excessive demands on the students' attention span and powers of concentration, let alone the demands on the teachers' physical and mental stamina. Teachers have extended their contact time without question, committing themselves to a regular pattern of long working days. For all intents and purposes the activities might as well be added to the school timetable - they are added to the music teacher's.

Two types of activities are especially difficult to accommodate within the school timetable; one is the individual lesson,the other is the large-scale band, choir or orchestral rehearsal. Music teachers have an unparalleled problem in convening rehearsals within the school day as, unlike games which tend to be based on stratified year-groups, bands, orchestras and choirs draw students across a number of year-groups, and often from the entire age-range of the school. Vertical or family grouping, an arrangement whereby students from within a two or three year age-range are timetabled for music at the same time, makes possible a mixture of small and large group activity: viable ensembles, sectional rehearsals, upper or lower school bands, and group lessons in which younger students can learn in the company of more experienced students. It could also allow for practice time for the musically involved, for a whole variety of student-directed activities,and for more adventurous permutations and combinations of purpose groups.

Programmes for 'shop window' occasions, concerts and carol services could be rehearsed by ready-made ensembles working in a music workshop environment similar to that of the timetabled ensemble lessons at Pimlico School or the American School in London. It would not simply be a case of preparing frantically towards a fast approaching performance

of specially chosen pieces, but a matter of putting on show the everyday work of the students so that they may gain the experience of a public performance. The distinction might appear academic but it is a fundamental one nonetheless. Programmes for concerts would be a logical outgrowth of the music being studied in the curriculum, not an overriding concern towards which everything else is channelled.

It would hardly be feasible to provide adequate vertical grouping for an entire orchestra drawing from all years. Large-scale activities would probably be better catered for at a music centre. Within school, activities would, by perforce, be stratified at least into broad age bands, the way many large comprehensives are broken down into a number of self-contained upper, lower and middle schools. There may be a junior, elementary string group, spanning years one to three; a middle school wind ensemble, for fourth and fifth formers; and a brass ensemble at sixth form level. Only two age groups (7 to 8 and 9 to 10 year olds) need be differentiated in primary schools.

An occasional activity might be a 'music in action' workshop: one whole week of intensive music-making involving recitals, large and small group playing, demonstrations and experimental groups.

Founded on workable principles, four strategies and scenarios, based on two LEA resources and a variety of schools, are described in detail and prefaced by brief accounts of the current scene in each Authority. It is envisaged that each of the alternatives set out would provide a comprehensive method of reaching all pupils: offer all the opportunity to participate at a variety of levels. From time to time individuals may be taken out of the seedbed to be given booster lessons or to make up groups of high achievers. In the scenarios, music is viewed as an

umbrella term like games: resources are pooled for greater efficiency; instrumental teachers are looked at de novo; any instrumental skills class teachers have are utilised; and aims and objectives common to instrumental and classroom teachers are formulated. First, there is an assessment of how the two roles can be brought closer together yet quintessentially remain different, and a discussion on how instrumentalists and classroom teachers can break down the present logjam that exists between them, how they can integrate their respective work yet at the same time preserve some of the specialist nature of the peripatetic role.

Faced with the sorts of changes envisaged, albeit at this stage largely hypothetical, we must ask ourselves a whole range of questions, including for example: How feasible is integration? Will instrumental teachers be adaptable enough to cope with change, or will it overwhelm them? Could they accept radical and wholesale changes to instrumental teaching methods, chiefly, that is, teaching groups? Would they relate to the curriculum as a whole? What is in mind is that the instrumental teacher will enact with equal rigour several interlocking roles: as consummate musician, having the ability to move widely through the various strands of musical styles and idioms; as group and individual teacher, widening his own teaching range and at ease in large and small-scale teaching situations; as team teacher and leader of team-teaching sessions, working with colleagues in a way that potentiates camaraderie yet at the same time encourages individual expression; as initiator and practitioner of music curricula, devising learning experiences as an integral part of a total structured curriculum.

Teachers would need to be versatile, more willing to develop

catholicity of musical tastes. For example, a foundation course for clarinettists could include demonstrations in a variety of styles from Mozart to traditional and modern jazz and lead on to other instruments perhaps alto and tenor saxophone. We can be justifiably outraged by the narrowness of modern specialisation, of brass band instrumentalists who cannot be bothered to learn French horn fingering, or pianists who refuse to acquire the skills of playing up-tempo. Particularly in the sort of pluralistic society which exists today with many possible ways of coming to music, these sorts of divisive attitudes compartmentalise music and create artificial barriers when we should be building bridges. Personal preferences towards one brand of music can be taken into account, perhaps when deciding on a range of activities, but they should not intrude. In this way a pupil interested in jazz rock may find something he likes other than that; he will have been exposed to a variety of other mediums. Moreover by exposing him to music he would not have sought out for himself, his horizons will have been expanded. Such learning experiences must offer something immediate but also something longer term that will lead on. It is not simply a matter of what pupils should know but what they can do with what they know. Such a course would necessarily involve a partnership between instrumental and classroom teachers. The key is partnership. Integration here does not involve junior and senior partners but equals sharing initiative and with an equal say in the spread of activities on offer - the first year of the secondary school would seem to provide a fitting interface.

From a school teaching viewpoint, one of the defects of the Conservatoire system in which a large number of our instrumentalists have undergone initial training, is specialisation at too early a stage.

It does not follow, however, that if music college courses were more general, less concerned with a single instrument, a particular area of music,or with the specificities that we are so good at, that our attitudes would necessarily change,but our skills at teaching a range of instruments,in a variety of idioms to a broader base of pupils,might sharpen up. Neither does it follow that to do this would necessarily mean a decline in the standards of instrumental teaching or of performance, nor that larger numbers of pupils would need only simple fare, though it is easy to see such arguments being put about by those who have, as their prime objective, the provision of players for the youth symphony orchestra or championship brass band. Of course it is possible to be restricted by one's own versatility, the old adage 'Jack of all trades' is true enough,but at all-ability,foundation course level it is necessary to maintain an overview of the subject,not to travel down some narrow, specialised avenue which might only attract a minority. Teachers contributing to this type of early-years course would have to accept a dual role, a role of animateur - capable of simplifying for the benefit of a general audience - and a more traditional role of instrumental specialist.

But if the role of the instrumental teacher becomes broader, more like that of the classroom music teacher, a general practitioner, where is the dividing line between the two to be drawn? Is the short answer that it becomes blurred and in reality ceases to exist? The questions highlight a dilemma that faces us: on the one hand we want to continue to enjoy the diversity of musical expertise that an instrumental team can offer and the benefits that accrue,ie.,youth orchestras and bands of remarkable quality; on the other hand, we want instrumental teachers to

concern themselves more with education, for their work to be integrated into the curriculum and into the school as a whole, to think of themselves as teachers as well as musicians. It could conceivably be argued that the more successful our orchestras and bands are, there is less of a case for change. Emphatically, the instrumental teacher should not be squeezed out of the system, as appears to be the case in some quarters, thought of as an expendable luxury that we can no longer afford,but brought into the classroom. The issue, however, is unlikely to be settled at a time when many peripatetics are still not thought of as being part of the schools they visit, let alone admitted into the hallowed ground of the curriculum.

9.2 Instrumental music in two LEA's : the current scene

1. Solihull

The Metropolitan Borough of Solihull employs an instrumental music team comprising eighteen full-time and three part-time staff (see p.377 appendix D). With the addition of the Co-ordinator who divides his time equally between teaching and administration, there are six brass teachers, five of whom are full-time; five string teachers including a senior teacher and one part-time teacher; six woodwind teachers, again with senior teacher and two part-time staff; a full-time guitarist - a post currently outstanding; and a music centre secretary who works fourteen hours weekly. Several staff are unqualified teachers so presently they have only instructor status. Four instructors teach brass, three woodwind and another teaches strings. Full-time staff work a weekly minimum of twenty-seven and a half hours shared between primary and secondary schools. In the primary sector tuition is free and given usually in groups though pupils may opt by payment for shared or individual lessons at one of nine music centres. Charges are made (under Section 53 of the 1944 Education Act) for all instrumental tuition at secondary level and lessons take place out of school hours. Free group lessons can be granted in certain deserving cases.* Similarly, students studying for GCE 'A' level music examinations are entitled to receive free tuition on one instrument. As to be expected Solihull teachers are obliged to work when schools are officially closed, before and after the normal school day. Several teach as early as 8 am., others late into the evening or on Saturday mornings for which they are allowed time in lieu

*viz., for families receiving Supplementary Benefit or Family Income Supplement Benefit.

within school hours. There are some secondary school children, however, for whom lessons are possible during the school day provided that they can attend a nearby music centre. To teach them on their own school premises would, seemingly, be acting unlawfully. Sixth form College students are not governed by the out-of-school ruling.

At the time of writing 6.6% (2043) of the total school population in Solihull receive instrumental tuition as compared with other Midland Authorities: 1.5% in Birmingham, 5% in Wolverhampton and 4.4% in Sandwell. Currently 164 individual lessons are given, 480 shared lessons (ie., two pupils) and 203 group lessons - at primary level more than three pupils in a group and normally up to six . (See note on page 376.)

Selection takes up to a month to complete and is carried out initially at school level. Firstly, the interest for a particular instrument should come from the children themselves stimulated by school activities. Secondly, school staff who know the children submit a list of prospective candidates thought suitable in terms of reliability, perseverance and home background. Problems come not so much from a lack of parental support but more from parents who will not accept the selection procedure. In some schools use is made of the Bentley test. Thirdly, candidates are vetted by the instrumental team who test them aurally and check embouchure, finger span or bowing arm for example, to make certain that they are physically capable of playing the chosen instrument. Where possible combined testing sessions take place whereby children found unsuitable for one instrument can be tested for another without unnecessary delay or disappointment. From the outset the instrumental team tries to ensure a balanced distribution of would-be instrumentalists so that ensembles can be formed at the earliest

opportunity. 95% of those receiving tuition own their instruments, indicative perhaps of the salubrious 'Mayfair of the Midlands' image of Solihull. The rest either make use of one of the retail hire schemes or they borrow for a maximum period of two years from Borough resources - without exception the more expensive or specialised instruments. Although resources do not include standard flutes, clarinets and trumpets these are sometimes available where individual schools have purchased them through capitation or PTA funds. Central resources are allocated where there is thought to be a need perhaps to complete an existing complement of instruments or to balance an ensemble. Invariably, tubas are placed in schools with at least the nucleus of a band.

Centrally-based large scale activities comprise: five orchestras one in the North of the Borough (grade III strings, grade IV wind); Junior (grades I-IV); Intermediate (grades IV and V strings and wind respectively); Youth (grade VI upwards); and a highly advanced chamber orchestra, known as the Sinfonia, which rehearses in school holidays to allow former pupils, many of whom are now college and university students living away from home, the opportunity to join forces and increase the level of performance. There are four wind bands, again one in the North, three in the South of the Borough, roughly parallel in standard to the junior, intermediate and youth orchestras respectively, and a Youth Jazz Orchestra. Membership of orchestras and bands is determined by auditions held annually at the end of the summer term.

A teacher's band, made up of beginners, non-specialist teachers of music and second-study instrumentalists, meets weekly at a local resources' centre. Quite apart from providing for the development of latent musical talent, the band affords class music teachers - many of

whom are primarily pianists yet have to direct the school band - first-hand experience of playing a woodwind or brass instrument. There is, after all, a limit to what anyone can absorb of other people's experience. As other subject staff and headteachers also play in the band, the influence it has had throughout the Borough has been widespread. It has prompted through its members the cause of instrumental music in schools and developed sympathetic attitudes toward it at a time when the importance of new-found support amongst colleagues cannot be gainsaid.

A Saturday morning music school supplements the normal peripatetic provision and aims to provide regular ensemble experience at an elementary level in addition to choral activities, aural, theory and general musicianship classes. There are two strings groups, an orchestra, three choirs, two recorder groups, a junior project (classroom instrumental work), two wind bands, various mixed ensembles and guitar classes.

2. Sandwell

An amalgam of two former local authorities, Warley and West Bromwich, the Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell has, as its present establishment, the equivalent of thirty-three full-time instrumental staff. Divided into three groups the team comprises: brass, eight full-time staff, three part-time; strings, nine full-time, three part-time; woodwind, seven full-time and one part-time (see p.378 appendix D). There is also a part-time percussionist who teaches in four High schools. The irony of it is that some of the so-called part-time staff work longer hours than full-time teachers, possibly up to twenty-nine hours weekly, but as they are paid 'sessionally', that is only for contact time and therefore do

not qualify for payment during school holidays, they are termed part-time.

In addition to the weekly twenty-seven and a half hours' statutory full-time requirement, most staff are involved in unpaid extra-timetabled* activities. Saturday morning activities - usually a three-hour-long session - are either included in the weekly minimum requirement in which case the staff receive time in lieu, or they are classed as sessional for which teachers are paid overtime. Many lessons, like those in Solihull, have to be fitted into odd corners of the day, before, after school and at lunch time.

Of the eleven staff comprising the brass team, four have qualified teacher status and similarly four of the eight woodwind staff have DES recognition. Latterly, as with other Authorities, instructors have been called for interview only in absence of suitably qualified applicants. Moreover, the tendency has been to expect would-be staff to teach, in addition to their own specialism, a range or whole family of instruments. There are, however, notable exceptions: a French horn specialist, who works largely from the two music centres, and a newly-appointed bassoonist who in point of fact is adept at teaching throughout the woodwind family. This policy of staff both generalising and specialising makes for flexible and expedient timetabling. Seen as part of a continuum across primary and secondary sectors, instrumental teaching is zoned; in other words, the same teacher visits a high school and all its primary feeder schools.

Presently there are two heads of department ; one with overall responsibility for woodwind and brass, another in charge of strings.

*not the writer's term but that used by the staff.

Each has additional duties as head of the respective music centres and for youth band or orchestra activities. All other qualified staff hold scale points, given usually for posts of responsibility, perhaps to take charge of area or music centre groups and involving preparation, concerts and so on - more than mere attendance on Saturday mornings.

Music centre activities include ensemble playing from the earliest stages to advanced level; four wind bands from junior through to immediate, senior and concert band; a newly-formed dance orchestra; and three orchestras of comparable standard to the wind bands. At primary level there are six brass bands and eight orchestras. These are not school-based groups but centrally organised, comprising children from a number of local schools. Two high school brass bands feed the youth band and similarly two senior orchestras supply the youth orchestra - a relatively recent venture within this Authority. From a total school population of 61,500, 2,699 receive instrumental tuition. 800 children attend music centre or area activities. Approximately ten per cent of Sandwell children own their instruments. A scheme whereby the Authority negotiates a bulk purchase price and then resells the instruments to parents below retail cost, has proved attractive, particularly so as repayments can be spread over a two-year period.

Primarily, instrumental staff are dependent on schools for advice concerning suitability and 'stickability' of would-be players. Often schools choose children that have already 'proven their worth' on recorder, as a means of determining to some extent whether interest will be maintained on another instrument. Instrumental teachers check for aural and physical capabilities - in any case something for which only the specialist is equipped. A few schools select initially by Bentley

test results.

Group lessons are advocated for players at below grade five standard. Although groups are not necessarily made up of instruments of one kind, they tend to be reasonably homogeneous. Whilst, for instance, an E flat tenor horn player could share a lesson with players of B flat instruments, he would be unlikely to do so. More probable is that he would be placed in a group composed entirely of players of E flat instruments, with perhaps an E flat bass (tuba) player or with fellow tenor horn players of a slightly higher or lower standard. It should be reiterated that the sheer homogeneity of brass band instruments, coupled with the similarity of technique and - excepting bass trombone - the use of treble clef across the entire range of instruments, lends itself readily to group tuition. Moreover, the instruments can be divided into two or three viable sub-groups, B flat, E flat and trombones, though treble clef trombonists are frequently incorporated within a B flat group. Mixed woodwind instrument groups would, perhaps, be more problematic; mixed string groups less so. In Sandwell, woodwind and string groups comprise without exception instruments of one sort; that is, separate groups of flutes, clarinets, violins, celli and so on. One-to-one lessons are to be found largely amongst the woodwind where the numbers of pupils learning oboe or bassoon, to take but two examples, may be insufficient for group tuition to be feasible.

The value of teaching groups is something the head of brass and woodwind, a Euphoniumist, has believed in unceasingly, having been a brass band player. He is quick to point out, however, that his view of group teaching does not extend to the idea of three pupils each receiving ten minutes of a half-hour period. This 'semi-group' situation is

discouraged; each member of a group, he avers, should be involved throughout the duration of the lesson. Teachers are expected to teach six pupils within an hour, though in reality this figure is somewhat reduced. Whilst there may be three or four students in a group, shared lessons - two students - are not atypical.

To date there have been two in-service courses organised by the Authority, whereby non-specialist music teachers from junior and high schools, have been invited to learn from absolute beginner stages how to play a brass instrument. The second of these courses is continuing to this day. Working in ensemble, these thirteen non-specialist musicians have gained enough technique to make sense of their instruments, but the most far-reaching benefits - like those that have accrued from the similar Solihull scheme - are that these teachers are now able to provide the necessary follow-up work for their own school pupils, as well as stimulate their enthusiasm.

Central administrative staff, apart from typing circulars and dealing with the day-to-day paper work of the instrumental team, help by copying non-copyright materials. Two years ago the staff undertook the production of a Borough tutor, designed for use in group and individual brass lessons. Much a team effort, the brass teachers were involved from when first the idea was mooted to final draft. Several manuscript prototypes were rejected in favour of the resultant published edition which, widely accepted by pupils, was felt most appropriate to their needs. The book, provided gratis to beginners, is substantially more comprehensive than several of the commercially published tutors. It embraces well-known traditional songs, original rhythmically asymmetrical pieces, duets and trios, together with an especially helpful hints section on playing in

ensemble. A companion string tutor is in preparation.

Guidelines, developed by the brass team and issued in the form of three printed brochures, set out an internal system of assessment. Graded exercises from a series of thirty which make up each brochure, can be introduced when corresponding work is covered in lessons. Given concurrently, scalic studies and sight reading materials provide an indication of the compass and rhythmic capabilities of players. Together with the exercises, they go some way towards establishing a common means of grading progress. The intention behind the assessment scheme was to bridge the gap between beginner level and grade III Associated Board standard.

Currently under review, it is suggested that new assessment levels should be aligned with Guildhall Music Examination syllabi. There appear, however, to be two fundamental reasons for retaining an internal system of some sort: firstly, that already alluded to of standardising assessment; and secondly, many parents are unable to meet the cost of expensive external examinations. Questions should be raised, however, as to the validity of an internal system of assessment outside of its immediate locality. Perhaps the only saving grace of external graded examinations is that they are widely recognised. Apropos of assessment, instrumental teachers complete by questionnaire a yearly survey to determine which children participate in area or central activities and the numbers regularly involved.

9.3 Strategies and scenarios

The strategies and scenarios show possible lines of approach and in broad terms these are two-fold: those that put forward a radical course of action and others which take a middle line of approach. In the second of these, whilst the changes are not fundamental they could serve as a model for a more gradualist approach to restructuring, since some teachers may wish to begin rather conservatively and then progress to more comprehensive and integrated instrumental work. Of the four scenarios described, two are based on schools in Solihull; two more on Sandwell schools. Both junior and secondary sectors are represented across the two authorities to help teachers determine which approaches could be appropriate for their own teaching situations.

Possible reorganisational strategy 1 (radical course of action)

The description which follows is based on a Solihull Primary School. It has a three-form intake. Three of the on-site staff play instruments: the headmaster is a brass player; the teacher with specific responsibility for music is a pianist; and another, a guitarist. The visiting instrumental team comprises: a clarinettist; two string teachers, a violinist and cellist; and a trombonist who is also a composer and enjoys teaching class music. Collaboratively, in discussions between school staff and the instrumental team, best initiated by teachers themselves, they might plan a number of 'taster' courses. Common aims could be set down, namely, that the courses ought not to be at one extreme diversionary, simply dabbling in music; nor at the other extreme should they be solely concerned with the acquisition of executant skills -

six-week crash courses in instrumental playing. They could, however, be imaginative, wide-ranging, educationally valid, concerned with and giving experience of, the basics of musicianship - in the broadest sense of the term - and germane to the majority of pupils. The learning experiences ought to be enabling, immediate, meaningful and productive. In addition, they should serve both the needs of those who later might choose never to play again yet provide those who wish to continue with a firm foundation on which to build.

Initially, activities and practicable ratios of pupils to teachers might be drawn up for the first half-term only. These would in all likelihood need to be readjusted depending on the choices made after each course.

fig.3 Projected range of activities (primary school)

range of activities for the first half-term	number of pupils	on site staff	visiting staff
general music class	20	-	1
piano group	8	1	-
guitar class	16	1	-
woodwind group	8	-	1
string class	30		2
brass group	8	1	-

Children would follow a course for six weeks then could choose to change activities. At the end of the diagnostic half-term, those children who showed outstanding promise or motivation, could take up group lessons

at a local music centre.

If the scheme were implemented across the third form band, there would be a 'second chance' opportunity in the final year of primary school for those who due to absence or there being insufficient places in a particular group, missed out first time. For these nine and ten year-olds then, some ninety children in all, the whole of Wednesday afternoons could be given over to music. The activities described are envisaged as taking place in the fourth week of the scheme.

Scenario 1

Twenty children could be timetabled for general music with the peripatetic trombone teacher. Working on group compositions they would need to occupy the main music room, practice cell, corridor and an adjacent room belonging to the second deputy head.

After three weeks of tuition a guitar class of sixteen may be playing a three-note piece from a group tutor by Brian Whitehouse, a local instrumental teacher. The tutor is unusual in that not only does it cover a wide range of idioms, but that from the outset the children play then write or improvise their own tunes using the notes available to them. Acquiring sufficient technique to make up and play their own music, the children should function as players, composers, listeners and critics. They should learn that the guitar is ideal both as an intimate, solo instrument or as part of an ensemble. The tutor, a facsimile of the composer's manuscript, leaves much space for the player's compositions.

The woodwind group comprising eight, four each of flautists and clarinettists, would in all probability spend a considerable amount of

time readjusting mouthpieces, reeds and ligatures. After attending studiously to each player's embouchure, lest there were any suggestions that group-taught students have poor embouchures, the teacher might question to see if anyone could recall the rhythmic patterns they made up last time. Hopefully, at least some of the players would remember and be able to demonstrate their answers. Turning to Woodwind Workbook by Philippe Oboussier, individually they could play their own rhythmic patterns, flautists first on the flute head (sounding A flat) and then clarinettists on the mouthpiece and barrel of the instruments (sounding F). Subsequently, they could play the minor third as a chord then each player in turn might improvise a new rhythm. After every improvisation the chord should be restated after which the group repeats the given pattern. Eventually, the simple memory game might give way to increasingly complex variants: the patterns could be played backwards, dynamics may be alternated and different tonguing syllables might be used. When the instruments are fully assembled and checked for alignment by the teacher, the players could profitably spend time matching tones, listening for flatness or sharpness, separating and combining interesting sounds.

In recent weeks a piano group of eight may have been doodling, finding attractive sonorities, clustering sounds, discovering the geography of the keyboard, ascertaining how the same notes placed close together produce a growling effect (resultant tones) at one end of the keyboard,yet have striking definition and brightness (summational tones) at the other end. This lesson each player could attempt some sight reading. Although each attempting to play the same piece it would be highly unlikely that the players would give similar interpretations. The

group could be told how the ability to sight read is an invaluable skill for session musicians, orchestral players and rehearsal pianists, how it requires the ability to read slightly ahead of one's playing, how even when making mistakes it is better to carry on to the end without breaking the continuity or line of the music, how rhythm, dynamics and phrasing are as important as the notes themselves.

Unlike previous lessons when the children would usually be gathered around the piano, this time they could be asked to take up positions some distance from the keyboard, to listen and await their turn. If the piece Doodling by Tom Johnson were used the directions should be pasted onto card, placed on the music rest of the piano and then one by one each player should perform the work:

> 3
> Begin some very soft doodling with your right hand in the upper part of the keyboard. Continue the doodling as you read. Do not let your playing distract you from your reading, and do not let your reading distract you from your playing. The two must accompany each other. Now, without stopping the right-hand doodling, play a loud low note with your left hand, and sustain it for a moment. Continue the doodling and, whenever you feel the time is right, play another loud bass note. Do not wait too long between the loud low notes, but do not play them too close together either. Try not to worry about when you should or should not play another loud low note. If you become too involved with thinking about that, you will not be able to carry out your other tasks as well. Your attention should always be about equally divided between the three things: the reading, the right-hand doodling and the loud low notes.

Only when each one has played should they discuss the music and comment on each performance. They could discuss the reasons for sight reading and the role of rehearsal pianists. The teacher might then play a song from a 'twenties musical with an afterbeat, vamping accompaniment. A new term, thumb-tones, may be introduced and after some speculative ideas from the children as to its meaning, the teacher might like to add that it probably originated with the early Broadway rehearsal pianists

from a need to make the piano sound orchestral. Once again he could demonstrate. The thumb-tone effect, a unifying device, is achieved by using the right hand thumb to bring out the tune whilst the other fingers play the accompaniment. Working in pairs the players could make up their own thumb-tone pieces with after-beat accompaniments.

In the school hall, thirty children might be getting to grips with Paul Rolland's Prelude to String Playing. Tuning, first in unison then in fifths, would probably take a long time despite there being two string teachers on hand and their having arrived early to set up and complete much of the preliminary tuning of the instruments. In readiness to play, some of the children could perform action routines or look back through the tutor book and finger silently the exercises they learnt the previous week whilst the others continued to tune.

One teacher might take up a position of leader at the centre of the children who should group themselves into a horseshoe pattern, the other violin teacher could stand in the midst of the back row whilst interested form teachers might look on from the side. Constant reminders should be given of correct stance and placement of the feet. Those children standing incorrectly should learn to readjust their positions until there are encouraging glances all around. Consciously or unconsciously by a process of modelling they should absorb similar playing positions. Short melodies could be successively sung, fingered, played pizzicato and then bowed using short strokes.

Following a protracted plenary sessi n, in which perhaps the leader has set a driving pace, the class should be divided into smaller groups to allow time for the children to take hold of the process of playing for themselves. Some might choose to pair-up but there may also be groups of

four or five players. Each group could find a part of the hall in which to work whilst the teachers circulate around the groups in turn, identifying individual problems and relaying urgently those which have repercussions for the whole class. Sometimes it may be necessary for them to keep their distance in order to observe just how the children interacted with one another; how they listened, how they watched, how they tried out new ideas.

In a room away from the rest of the school, a group of eight aspiring brass players may be struggling to play open G's and C's at the same time. As often happens through attributes either innate or developed, one or two of the group may already have some semblance of embouchure; what the others lacked in aptitude they might possibly make up for in perseverance. The 'naturals' could be allotted the upper notes of a four-part chord whilst the rest, perhaps two on each part, might be given the lower notes. Each pair could first sing then play its respective notes. Eventually a complete if not resounding chord should be managed. After some guidance from the teacher on production, the composition Swell Piece by James Tenney might be introduced.

4

James Tenney

Swell Piece

for Alison Knowles

To be performed by any number of instruments beyond three, and lasting any length of time previously agreed upon.
Each performer plays one long tone after another (actual durations and pitches free and independent).
Each tone begins as softly as possible, builds up to maximum intensity, then fades away again into (individual) silence.
Within each tone, as little change of pitch or timbre as possible, in spite of the intensity changes.

James Tenney
12/67

It would be desirable if the players carefully read the directions for themselves and then discussed how they might achieve a climactic performance. Two contrasting instrumental choirs could be formed, one made up of bright (cylindrical) tones, the other of mellow (conical) tones. Perhaps after a reminder to take care of the instruments, one of the groups should be sent off to practise in another room, the teacher first staying behind to help one group, then looking in to see how the

other group had progressed. The players of larger instruments - euphonium and tuba - usually find it difficult and taxing to build the required intensity of dynamic so have to work towards softer, more subtle beginnings. Hopefully both groups would show concern for the tone quality, timbre and character of the music they were attempting to create. They might look discerningly at the overall structure, decide who will play when, who will begin, who will finish the piece? They could work on building sound layers, contrasting antiphonal colour changes, fading one sound out and blending another in. They should discover and practise techniques for making possible the sounds, viz., breath control, steadiness of stance, the tonguing actions required to start and complete each note.

After forty minutes or so the two groups could come together again to perform their pieces. Both should be recorded on to tape. Not surprisingly, even though the groups had held the directions in mind, the pieces would undoubtedly be dissimilar in character and intention. Both should have sensitive, imaginative moments. Of course there may well be many inadvertent moments too, but that is only to be expected with such inexperienced players, grappling with newly-acquired techniques. Listening again to the performances, the players might make constructive comments about the pieces and about the need to play in this way. As an unsought by-product, they would have alighted on skills vital to any brass player. The teacher might choose to conclude the lesson by playing a recording of Sonata Piano e Forte by Giovanni Gabrieli.

Possible reorganisational strategy 2 (radical course of action)

A mixed 11-16 secondary school (NOR 800) has an active music department. Formerly a pilot school for the Schools Council Project, Music in the Secondary School Curriculum, it has made something of a practice of small group activity. There are two full-time music teachers, a pianist and a clarinettist. Whilst retaining a general music course for first years, it could be that the music staff would better serve their second and third year pupils by a system of options. By floating a number of ideas, they might begin to consider what range of activities could be offered. Clearly it would be preferable to round out rather than merely fill up a programme of activities. Although they may want to involve the peripatetic team in some way, either to increase the scope of ensemble activities on offer, or simply to provide numbers of staff sufficient for group work to be feasible, they would hardly want 'technical sectional' rehearsals. That would represent a completely different way of working from the one envisaged. More likely they would seek and set down in their terms of reference, to foster comprehensive musicianship through and around instrumental work. Executant skills should be as nothing compared to a student's understanding and grasp of the expressive nature of music - all kinds of music. Implicit in this concept would be concern for the development of potentialities. They might foresee mixed ability grouping though subsequently some grouping by attainment would not necessarily be precluded. Inevitably such a scheme, offering a number of activities from which students could choose, would propose problems of organisation. It is anticipated that after a spoonfed course in the first year, second year students might find a sudden choice of activities somewhat

perplexing. Clearly, the teachers would need to prepare the ground for this kind of activity within the formative first year. During that time students should become accustomed to working in self-directed groups ranging widely over musical periods, styles and idioms. By the second year, their breadth of musical experience would have to be sufficient to enable them to make informed, realistic decisions so that they could work at their own level on music of interest to them.

In conversation with the Co-ordinator for instrumental music in the Borough, the teachers might discuss both the mechanism for change and the format of the proposed activities. Possibly the same lines of thought would keep surfacing throughout the discussions: viz., that the role of the instrumental teacher should not be perfunctory and peripheral to the work of the curriculum but supportive. They might notice en passant, that the visiting instrumentalists had, lamentably, been the least regarded and most under utilised members of staff. Moreover, they may point out that in a time when music in the classroom had been becalmed through economic restraint, instrumental teachers had seemed like contrary winds - moving in opposite direction to the one needed. They may be unable to reconcile that whilst they had been teaching the whole range of students, instrumental teachers were teaching a select minority, often individually. They may see group lessons or group activities as a vehicle for involving more students and, in a cold economic climate, the first virtue that they save time and money would doubtless appeal. Clearly the scheme would have a chance of implementation only if there were instrumental staff around conducive to the ideas; staff with initiative, willing to develop a role extending far beyond that of technical expert. And so through this type of discussion the Co-ordinator and school music staff

might seek a wider understanding of the roles within school, instrumental teachers could play.

Clearly, whilst they would hardly want a sort of 'utility' teacher, the requisite qualities for the job would be such that those with only a narrow specialism would, in all probability, wish to extricate themselves as quickly as possible from the scheme. And yet if instrumental teachers are to learn to live with contraction in schools, such entrenched and intransigent attitudes are hardly conducive. Naturally, there would be some who might find it difficult to work effectively in such a milieu but to others, not least the Co-ordinator who - like five more of the team - has been a class teacher, the scheme may well appear an attractive proposition. To some degree, it would depend on how they viewed their roles, for the Co-ordinator's part the distinction between the roles of instrumental and class teacher would appear quite untenable. For the rest, it would be but a short step from conceding that to conceding that instrumentalists ought to be coming into contact with the majority of students and therefore should be working within the curriculum. The place of instrumental music in school would then become evident. Suggestions as to how they might choose to shape the time within that place are given in the following scenario which is viewed as taking place in the second year of the scheme. The price of the scheme in terms of instruments, staff and room space would nearly always be too great but then the call of the new is a tall order.

Scenario 2

Four classes, two drawn from the second year and two from the third year, could come together each Friday morning for a double period

(80 mins.) of music. Timetabling second and third years at the same time, some 120 students in all, would make for a large, diverse group and these two factors, size and diversity would increase the chances of feasible flexible groupings. Ostensibly, the larger and more diverse the total group, the more likely certain students would be able to join a 'purpose' subgroup to meet their particular needs and musical interests. Musically advanced second years could work predominantly with groups of third year students whilst less able third years may choose to work alongside second years. There would be no form of selection except in the sense that the students could elect for one activity rather than another. They would be free to choose their own course structure from a combination of course units. In some ways it would be a logical extension of the taster course idea outlined earlier. They could indicate from a rich variety of activities a preference. Given that flexibility of group membership would enable students to opt for a course of direct interest to them and that the more advanced might want to by-pass certain activities; with this degree of freedom there must come responsibility. Activities should be organised so as to provide opportunities for large and small-scale group situations and that as a result form attitudes, habits and abilities which help students to work and play effectively with others. The composition of the groups ought to be appropriate to their purpose. Each of the activities might operate on one of three levels. Level one activities would perhaps be intended as purely exploratory, the second level could provide a deeper understanding of the subject in question, and the third level might try to open up some fresh avenues of musical experience. All the courses should begin with practical activities and pick up notational and theoretical aspects along the way - if and when needed.

fig. 4

2nd and 3rd year courses

		projected activities	on site staff	visiting staff	numbers of students
	large group activities	. woodwind, brass and percussion group	1	1	up to 30
		. string ensemble		2	up to 30
level I: purely exploratory	small group activities	. improvisation/composition	1		
		. folk guitar			
		. electronic workshop			20(4 groups of 5)
		. keyboards			
level II: providing a deeper understanding		. composition		1	
		. rock guitar			
		. electronic workshop			20(4 groups of 5)
		. keyboards			
level III: opening fresh avenues of musical experience		. composition/scoring		1	
		. classical guitar			20(4 groups of 5)
		. musique concrète			
		. jazz piano			

Basically there would be two main types of activities, those of the rehearsal type and those more interactive. Large groups would be most appropriate in a rehearsal-type setting where students would not easily be able to direct themselves. Additionally, large groups, in which there is a higher ratio of students to staff, would free some of the teachers for work with smaller groups where there should be greater emphasis on student interaction.

In all, up to sixty students might be involved in large group activities. Sixty more could be divided equally amongst three teachers and further subdivided into twelve purpose groups of five. These potential groupings would be considered temporary and subject to change according to whether more or less students were viable in certain activities and according to the purpose of the groups. For example: the exploratory level guitar group may well comprise many more than five. Similarly, the degree of teacher direction would vary depending on the nature and purpose of a group and whether the students concerned were able to lead sessions of study.

All participants should accomplish a number of important objectives at whatever level is appropriate to them. It follows then, that the quality of the work would hinge largely on the musical judgement of the students, as well as on the ability of the teacher to formulate attainable goals. In small group activities encouragement and criticism would play key roles. After all it is these that best serve the learning process. The activities propounded would encompass experimentation, listening and observing. Save for 'sound', the only real criterion, the absence of rules would throw much more obligation onto the participants. To introduce the subject matter the teachers might use verbs like: compose, find, listen to,

identify, select and compare. After improvising or composing music, students could then turn to rehearse and perform it in other groups. Others who may choose to stay with experimentation would be none the worse for that.

Of the three staff working with small groups, one might be the self-taught jazz pianist mentioned earlier in the case studies; another the peripatetic guitar teacher; and the third member of the team could be the head of the school music department. Each of the staff would supervise three instrumental activities - relevant to their specialist interests - plus a composition group. The piano and electronic courses might be implemented with the aid of PTA funds, though nowadays the cost of many of these instruments is within reach of departmental capitation. It is envisaged that the keyboard group would make use of small, portable electronic keyboards with preset orchestral tones and chords, perhaps an electronic organ, and a standard piano for the more teacher-directed course covering jazz piano styles. The electronic workshops might be equipped with five tape recorders, three of which should be reel-to-reel; and two suitcase-type synthesizers. Whilst room accommodation for small groups would rarely present difficulties, the lack of suitable available space for large group activities would be a problem in some schools. In this particular instance, the band - the woodwind, brass and percussion group - could rehearse in one of the two school halls whilst the string ensemble occupied the other. Both rehearsals should differ from the traditional type in respect to student activities. It is postulated that students would learn more than the skills relevant merely to the pieces under study and that staff would be concerned with imparting all-round musicianship. To take listening as an example, as well as attending to

their own sounds and to the sounds of others in the ensemble, the students should listen to recorded music as well. Listening could be directed towards specific objectives. Tone quality might be imitated, stylistic conventions emulated, interpretation discussed, rhythms copied, structural points noted, potential technical problems analysed and ironed out prior to playing a given piece.

At times the larger ensembles may be split up into student-directed groups: the band possibly into a mixed woodwind ensemble, clarinet choir, brass ensemble, jazz group and percussion workshop; the string ensemble into quartets and sectional groups. The composition of each type of group would, of course, deviate according to whether a particular score required more or less instruments.

Possible reorganisational strategy 3 (middle line of approach)

A Sandwell Primary School with a strong tradition of music has in the past produced some remarkable almost precocious brass band players - the sort of social identity and its accompanying musical expression to which Victor Fox referred in interview. Recently, whilst the standard has remained consistent, some of the staff have expressed concern that not every child has had the opportunity to learn to play and those that have been given the opportunity have invariably been directed towards brass in preference to string or woodwind instruments. What follows then is an attempt to explore how, as an alternative to the present selective system and narrowness of instrumental choice, a whole class approach like the Tower Hamlets' model might work in this setting. Whole classes including form teachers would be taught by a leader and assisted by several helpers attending to individuals within the classes. Basically it would be team teaching with the provision for follow-up lessons given by the form teachers. Whole classes do not conflict with the timetable. Hitherto, class instrumental tuition in this country has tended to be limited to one family of instruments at any one time but this need not necessarily be the case as the Americans have shown by teaching, albeit with a specialist team, full complement beginner bands in this way. Since string group teaching and content have already been spelled out in detail in the first of the scenarios, we will desist from describing again the sort of string activities that would be eminently practicable. Instead, it was decided to try to foresee the possibilities of incorporating within a whole class approach some of the teaching strategies and materials evolved from American high school band courses. In all

probability, the materials designed essentially for the American school system would require changes and adjustments, some fundamental, but at least they would open up the possibility of teaching woodwind, brass and percussion instruments all at the same time, thus broadening the choice of instruments available. Moreover, as Sandwell staff have shown considerable initiative in formulating internal tutor books and methods of assessment, it is anticipated that their resourcefulness might be further turned to good account in a combined woodwind, brass and percussion course.

Although they might begin by dipping into a 'packaged' course, eventually the teachers would probably spurn it in favour of their own. Like all those who use a course or method devised by someone else, the teachers would face the familiar conflict of whether to use it exclusively or expand, deciding certain details for themselves and perhaps diluting the method out of recognition. Many of the high school band courses are thorough though somewhat skill-orientated, unimaginative and straight-laced. A home-spun version could be less concerned with skill acquisition and pertinent to all the children involved.

It would need to be based on a continuum principle, sequential and cumulative. It should be a group approach, interactive and aural in that from the outset it would include imitation, playing by ear and improvisation. Sound traditional teaching maxims should be employed such as, sound before symbol and reinforcement by repetition - the latter particularly conducive to a group setting. Musical games would help to create an important fun element. Also, though it could hardly be taught, the staff should constantly be aware of a felt-response - how the children respond to the music, their feelings towards it, their insights

and attitudes. Such a course should, like the material Sandwell has already produced, be closely monitored, subject to continuous review and alteration.

Several features from the more imaginative band courses might be made use of, in particular, those whereby the players improvise from a given range of notes, where they are left to complete a tune or work out a familiar melody by ear. In some of the courses words are provided for all the melodies given to beginners. There would seem to be two decided advantages in this, firstly that the tunes may be used with singers and secondly, that they could be readily sung by the players themselves to help create an aural model of the piece in question.

Three of the instrumental staff might be involved in the course, two woodwind specialists and a trombonist who doubles on percussion. The instrumental make-up of the class should comprise flutes, clarinets, alto saxophones, cornets, horns, trombones, euphoniums, bass and percussion, or alternatively using only five types of instruments, flutes, clarinets, cornets, trombones and percussion. Double reeds, oboes and bassoons, are better left until after the beginner stage for woodwind players who later may wish to specialise in them. Apart from the expense of these instruments, it is hardly feasible to teach beginner oboists and bassoonists along with other instrumentalists in a class setting.

fig. 5 Whole class model

class of 30		staff
flutes	5	2 woodwind teachers
clarinets	9	1 brass teacher doubling percussion
saxophones	2	+ form teacher
cornet/trumpet	3	
horns	2	
trombones	3	
euphoniums	2	
bass	1	
percussion	3	
		or alternatively:-
flutes	8	
clarinets	9	
cornets	5	
trombones	5	
percussion	3	

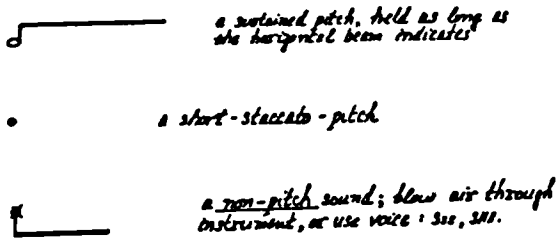
The activity suggested is seen as being possible with a fourth-year class. It should have a weekly hour-long lesson and follow-up.

Scenario 3

After following a standard course for beginner band in which much of the playing will have been unison and massed - albeit in small groups - it would be reasonable to expect the players to want to tackle, perhaps collectively in ensemble, something more imaginative and possibly of more intrinsic value. Stone Images by Sidney Hodkinson is an attempt to fuse basic instrumental playing with contemporary compositional technique. Moreover, it could well shift the emphasis from skill learning towards aural awareness and ordering of sounds.

Each of the instrumental parts, written within a restricted compass, makes few technical demands. In this way, the restrictions imposed for essentially practical reasons, allow the players to focus their attention on changes of texture, into sharpening and honing dynamics and on contrasting ensemble timbre. Each of the players is allocated one note only to play during each of the four movements. As the number of parts is arbitrary, there is substantial latitude in respect to the instrumental line-up, so much so that the piece would be playable by almost any ad hoc ensemble. The teacher then is free to assign the parts at his discretion and according to the individual potential of the players on hand. String players need not be precluded. In effect, each player, or group of players supposing that there were several reading the same part, has a solo, or soli, note. Three symbols are used throughout to indicate how the note should be played:

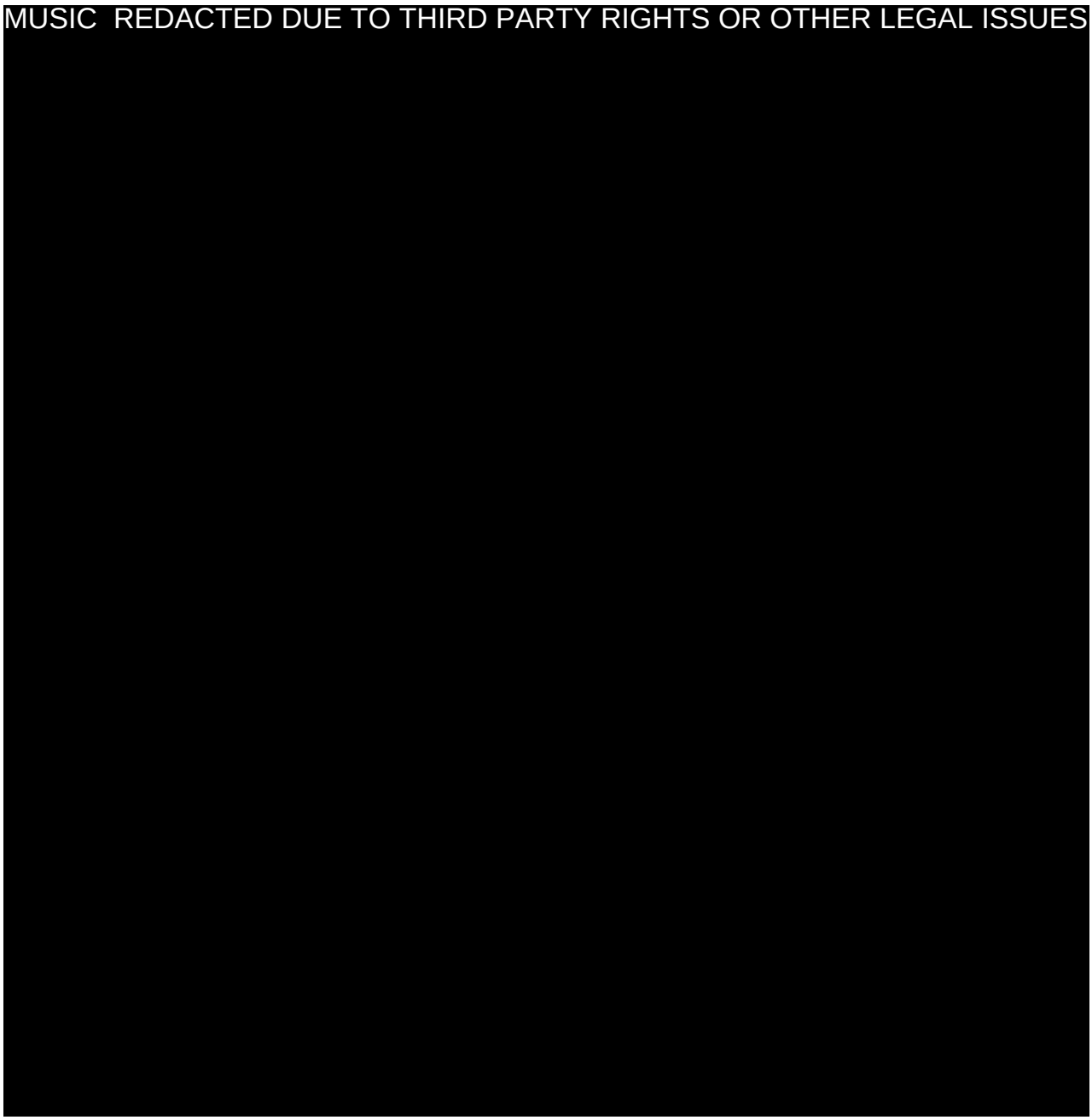
fig. 6
notational
symbols



Note lengths are approximate. Entrances and exits should be made according to the place indicated in the score between the leader's downbeats.

Prior to playing the composer suggests that the players briefly discuss the symbolism of the megaliths portrayed and the need for some form of appropriate notation for the sounds they evoke. Further, he suggests the players listen to recordings of works exemplifying contemporary styles of composition: Boulez, Ligeti, Penderecki, Reich and Xenakis are mentioned amongst others.

There are too many variables involved to proffer rehearsal procedures, doubtless teachers would want to evolve their own but clearly rehearsals might begin in small groups with pupils taking turns at conducting. If the groups were set apart in different areas of the school hall, spatial and antiphonal effects could be added. It is suggested that the performance be recorded in order that the players might discuss further the composer's intention in setting down the music. The work could then be taken as a starting-point for improvision and composition with similar limitations. Players might find that such restrictions would challenge, stimulate and channel their creative thoughts.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Possible reorganisational strategy 4 (middle line of approach)

A large six form entry High School (Comprehensive) in Sandwell has three full-time music staff. All are pianists though the two assistant music teachers are second study string players, one a violinist the other a cellist. Presently, music, art and drama are given two periods apiece on the timetable and are taught separately in forms. The school has a long tradition of instrumental music though this has been largely outside of the curriculum. In an attempt to bring it into the classroom and make small-group instrumental work viable in terms of numbers, music could be placed within a faculty of 'creative' arts; a familiar interdisciplinary approach which, in addition to music, might include art, drama and quite possibly PE, especially movement, though in some schools this is reserved for separate timetabling.

Within the first year of the secondary school there is ample scope for referring to other disciplines. The model is, of course, commonplace. If it were adopted there should have to be considerable changes in the roles played by school and instrumental staff alike. It would involve co-operative team work, differentiated staffing, flexible class groupings. Fundamentally there should have to be changes in attitudes towards subject autonomy. We may foresee problems with the deployment of instrumental teachers, they could no longer continue to be thought of - as some have previously - as a race apart. Along with experts from other disciplines they should benefit from a greater understanding of each other's work. Links between the subjects would be strengthened by the sharing of experience. The approach would be really another version of the options model but here the activities would be interdependent and interactive.

How though should we involve the instrumental staff? Basically there

are two ways in which they might be brought in. Firstly, if some measure of subject territoriality were preserved, which would seem probable, then simply having the instrumentalists group-teach would reduce to viable sizes the classes of other teachers within the faculty, enough perhaps to make activities like singing in class workable. Secondly, and more preferable, by using their specialist skills directly in an integrated studies course in a way that has some effect on other disciplines. The instrumentalist might then see his work as part of a structure more comprehensive and coherent. It would call for interdisciplinary discussion groups where collectively the teachers would review and question the validity of each activity. In brief there would have to be a true exchange of ideas. It would need a compatible team of teachers since nothing creates problems like dissension. The very existence of regular faculty meetings would ensure necessary dialogue between on-site and visiting staff and bring the latter directly into curriculum planning. It would extend their awareness across the whole curriculum and help towards a music curriculum in which everything would have its part.

To some this might seem oversimplistic. Frustration over those instrumental teachers - the isolationists - who want to preserve their detachment, or who perhaps show more concern with semi-professional engagements than with the schools in which they teach, is understandable but if group teaching enables more children to gain an experience of music, be it within an integrated arts approach or otherwise, we should be bending our minds as to how things can be changed instead of putting up Aunt Sally's which can be knocked down. Boulez once said that people who are really creative want to communicate. The time for such changes will never be right unless we make it so. The point surely is that whilst

we cannot generalise about which instrumental teachers would perhaps be better placed within clearly-defined subject areas and which teachers would enjoy the challenge of working between them, in an interdisciplinary approach, conceivably the two roles could co-exist. For sheer scope an interdisciplinary approach unquestionably has the edge; the possibilities are legion, but in addition to providing a wide range of activities there must be time for teachers to get to know their charges and time for the children to spend consolidating their interests in each of the activities as well as simply enjoying the diversity, the multiform experience of them overall. It has to be more than a brief conducted tour of subject areas; that would be meaninglessly superficial. It would be akin to dialling quickly through the various wavebands of a radio and being assailed by foreign chatter. Whilst being fully cognizant of the probability that some children would want to switch activities after too short a period of time, choices should be available and children ought to be making them.

Timetable blocking would, of course, make room for this kind of functioning. The four subject areas could come together to allow purpose groups to be formed. Smaller groups might be conducive to an 'atelier' approach. The work could range from almost entirely subject-based to completely integrated. The whole year group comprising 180 children might be divided between on-site and visiting staff. Of the latter, one would take a mixed woodwind group, another a percussion ensemble and a third - the same teacher who takes Sandwell's newly formed dance orchestra - a 'blues' band. School music teachers could cater for violin, cello and class singing whilst a senior member of staff - who is a cornet player - could take charge of a brass group. Other subject staff within the

faculty would include the two art teachers, the drama specialist and a teacher of girls' PE who has a particular interest in movement. The potential groupings may be typified in the following way:

fig.7

projected range of first year activities	number of pupils	on-site staff	visiting staff
Music:-			
class singing	30	1	-
mixed woodwind group	12	-	1
brass group	5	1	-
'blues' band	12	-	1
violin group	25	1	-
cello group	8	1	-
percussion ensemble	8	-	1
Art) two groups)	20	1	-
	20	1	-
Drama	20	1	-
Movement	20	1	-

Here then is one possible line of approach using the interdisciplinary model. The activity is envisaged as taking place in the third term of the scheme.

Scenario 4

Suppose the chosen topic to be explored through an interdisciplinary approach was to do with old and new, contrasts of tradition and innovation. We might foresee subsequent art, poetry, drama, music and movement presentations. The theme after all is a perennial one and would seem to offer ample scope for the various disciplines, either to pursue the theme in comparative isolation, though that would seem to frustrate the main purpose of working in this way, or for them to come together as a faculty. But in what practicable way might the visiting teachers be involved? Working co-operatively with other teachers they could contribute their own strengths and enthusiasms be them 'blues', percussion ensemble or whatever. They could collaborate on a work like The Horse Trough by Adrian Cruft (Joad Press). In substance the work is concerned with the imminent threat of demolition of a town's historic square, in which stands a stone horse trough, and re-development of the site with high-rise office blocks. Musically the work has scope for received, traditional forms of music-making and for more modern types that negate tradition. It offers opportunities for singers and a myriad of ensembles and it is here that the instrumentalists would come into their own.

Representative of the old parts of town, brass and string groups might play music harking back to an earlier age, in contrast to the percussion group's angular, stark sounds, illustrative of all that is new. A woodwind group could provide the accompaniments for the singers, the written parts are, at most, elementary. Additionally there are simple canonic tunes, rhythmic accompaniments, chord symbols for guitarists and

optional parts for tuned and untuned percussion. Effective use can be made also of musique concrète.

There might be an introductory 'lead' lesson in which one of the staff, with a particular interest in the chosen topic, introduces it to the whole year group and then joins with his colleagues in pursuing follow-up work with small groups. Of course not all the groups need be involved each term; some instrumental groups will be more suited to particular topics. Indeed, it may well be desirable to ring the changes and draw only on one or two groups at a time whilst the others pursue their regular instrumental lessons. It would be a matter of marshalling the existing skills and resources of the staff available to the chosen topic, perhaps in this case the teacher with an interest in light music or another with experience of music theatre. It may be a question of revamping and adapting those skills to the needs of the pupils and to the topic under consideration. Which groups ought to be involved should be decided early in departmental negotiations.

9.4 Limiting factors

The scenarios described are not intended to be taken as exemplary models of how to proceed - a slick answer to a complex issue is always wrong - they are merely possible lines of approach and invite consideration on that basis. The strategies are purely speculative designs, the scenarios a series of prototypes. Whilst none of the ideas is especially novel each, though running along pre-ordained lines, is fleshed out, given shape and form in some cases for the first time. But the overall concern, however, is not with the minutiae of the scenarios, which are largely to do with the particular setting and may be unrepresentative of other situations, but with the broad outlines set out. To reiterate, throughout the scenarios there is a common thread: group instrumental work is shown as a curricular activity rather than relegated to an extra-curricular one.

Today many look for a wider understanding of the possibilities for instrumental teaching in school and seek to optimise on them. There is an increased awareness that this valuable resource be put to the good of the majority of children. What then are the constraints which might militate against using this resource to its best advantage? First we should recall the issue over which there seems complacency; namely, that whilst the school music teacher has to contend with a class of thirty, the visiting instrumentalist continues to teach on a one-to-one basis. This is the ambivalence of the present situation and as such it rather ducks the question of whether instrumental teachers would pledge their futures in the kinds of activities proposed in the scenarios, if they seriously thought they would be implemented. Inevitably, some teachers

would answer in the negative. There are those to whom the activities envisaged would be abhorrent - the word hardly seems misplaced - but there are others who, at least, would view them as a basis for discussion. On the face of it, declining involvement does not square with a desire to teach in schools. The first constraint then is to do with the way in which instrumental teachers perceive their role in school.

The second constraint concerns the personal and professional attributes of teachers. Those perhaps who have arrived in teaching largely through default, and some who have not, might find it hard to work in such a new ambience. Whilst, undoubtedly, some would be more gainfully employed at local music centres we cannot pull the trick simply by taking them out of schools and reinstalling them elsewhere. In any event there are unlikely to be places in music centres for all but the most able group and individual teachers if the desire to teach in them were a true reflection of the feelings of the staff as a whole. School-based instrumental teachers with the requisite professional attributes would have to want to work with the majority of children. They would have to see the activities in which they were involved as purposeful if they were to make anything of them at all. Instrumental teachers with uncertain futures, a phenomenon hardly unknown in recent times, whose skills were no longer in demand should through in-service education have the chance to re-equip themselves for one of two possible roles, as an instrumentalist in a school or in a music centre. That, of course, simply begs the question of their willingness to undertake in-service training - the third constraint.

The in-service training given to school-based instrumental teachers would need to be as professionally rigorous as the initial and in-service

training undertaken by their counterparts teaching in music centres. Much of the course time should be given to group work. In-service courses, which incidentally might well offer a new lease of life for College of Higher Education music departments, would be a vital part of the mechanism for change but there are still two remaining constraints.

The first concerns incentives. Whereas a head of department position is a well-grounded hope for competent class music teachers, the promotional prospects of their instrumental colleagues are slim indeed, almost to the point that they can be discounted. Many qualified instrumentalists have their sights set on a maximum of scale two. For instructors even the first rung of the promotional ladder would seem unscalable and that can give rise to negative attitudes and misdirection of effort. The inference, that in some way they are not quite up to the job, must be irritating in the extreme. It is for these reasons that one music adviser advocates starting instructors on lecturer grade one scale with annual increments for competence and experience. Whilst on the question of fresh incentives, to prevent a sense of prestige being attached to one or other role - music centre or school-based instrumentalists - there should need to be a weighting of the point system whereby parallel posts of responsibility could be given for specific areas of curricular work.

The final constraint is to do with back-up facilities. There should be adequate support provision in the form of: technical help, music technicians to repair and maintain instruments; administrative agencies, for distributing resources; greater initial outlay for the numbers of instruments required; additional amounts of time in order for teachers to prepare adequately for group sessions; and available, suitable room

space. The availability of room space, may not be a problem in a time of falling rolls. The cost of instruments, however, may appear prohibitive though it can be spread out if they were accrued over a period of time. What is suggested in the scenarios is not an all or nothing proposition; it would be quite possible to start in a small way and build up the instruments cumulatively. With care, two clarinets purchased in the first year of the scheme would, as likely as not, still be in use five years hence.

Central to any back-up provision should be the Instrumental Co-ordinator. A supportive colleague working in this capacity would be an invaluable resource. He would not be required to take overall charge of the team, that responsibility would continue to rest with the music adviser. The role of a co-ordinator ought to be just that, someone without heavy teaching commitments who would liaise with school and music centre teachers. His brief would be wide: he should ensure a continuum across primary and secondary instrumental schemes and foster links with adult agencies; be responsible for, and guide entrants to instrumental group teaching during the formative induction period; plan regular meetings to discuss curriculum, group techniques and innovative, new approaches; set up induction courses and have knowledge of in-service ones; arrange observation for students undertaking teaching practice, match them with sympathetic supervisory staff and act as a consultant to whom they may turn for advice.

Finally, further support might be sought externally in the form of ancillary help from the community at large: unemployed people with musical skills; retired army bandmasters; young mothers who are trained musicians but having left full-time employment to raise families may be

willing to give an hour of their time - and other interested parents who would supervise group follow-up lessons.

Chapter Ten

Concluding remarks

In drawing together concluding remarks and restating the main points, it is necessary to look back over the text and remind ourselves of the overall conceptual structure of the study. Divided into three main sections and further broken down into ten subsections or chapters with considerable space given over to transcripted interviews and case study typescripts, each part of the study has contributed towards a central theme viz., an analysis of group instrumental teaching. Again and again effective ways of working with groups have been delineated in these pages. The interviews presented the practitioner's perspective, the observational data kept us firmly grounded in the actuality of the classroom and provided an entrée into the projected scenarios which looked, in turn, at agents of change and possibly more adventurous permutations and combinations of grouping students for instrumental tuition within the curriculum. It is, then, not simply an academic study, there are professional implications.

The methodology of the study could be developed professionally, perhaps as a starting-point in an investigation into small group activity within the class music lesson - a field in which there has been a paucity of research - or simply replicated in a further study into instrumental group teaching but taking just one of the many propositions, revealed by the Q-sort, as its major hypothesis.

We have suggested ways in which observation may be structured, ways that go beyond the earlier descriptive transcripts of practising group teachers which nevertheless remain a cornerstone of the study and provide a body of expert knowledge. As an appraisal of our own teaching can best

be taken when good practice can be referred to, the transcripts may, as they stand, be re-interpreted and utilised or be taken as pointers for further study.

If what the acknowledged group teachers have set in motion were to continue and grow, new attitudes would have to be adopted, not simply by teachers but by the pupils they teach and their parents. Those who accept the challenge of teaching groups would, along with those whose views have been included in this study, form a core of committed teachers scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country who might then pass on their enthusiasm and new-found skills to their colleagues. Given opportunities, such as the Yardsticks scheme affords, for teachers to influence each other at closer range, the upshot may be a cross-fertilisation of ideas and teaching strategies. Whatever the manner of its dissemination, such experience needs to be shared on a national basis. From a purely economic standpoint, LEA's would be wise to promote awareness of group teaching approaches; indeed latterly, there are some signs of this happening. This study may then have come at an opportune moment in time. Reflecting many current pressures, the gradual move towards appointing teachers with experience of handling groups is a harbinger of group tuition being a growing phenomenon. It is hoped, however, that teachers would want ultimately to evolve approaches which are their own and, though perhaps coming close to those detailed here, would not be mere journeyman copies.

What follows then is a résumé of the transcripted interviews:

The interviewees came to group teaching more by accident than by design; therein lay the main reason for their highly personal approaches. Generally, individual lessons were not supplanted by group lessons but

continued in addition to them.

A distinction was drawn between economic and educative rationale. The aims were broad statements of intent rather than specific objectives. The advantages of group tuition were thought to be manifold; the alleged shortcomings insignificant in comparison.

Selection was not widely practised. There was a wariness of parental support, especially so with adolescents. Lessons of between forty and forty-five minutes were thought appropriate; initially, they should be more frequent than once a week. Detailed preparation is required in the beginning stages of learning to teach groups. It is possible to involve all students at all times.

There is not an optimum group size. With the exception of adults, students should be of similar age-range. Group tuition need not be limited to entirely like-instrument groups.

Many group teachers evolve their own material; group work presupposes short pieces. A sense of unity emerges from working on a specific composer, or collection of pieces related by period or subject matter.

The interviewees differentiated between playing music and playing musical games. Games are not a standard resource of group teaching. Rote and memory learning may be used extensively in the early stages.

A balance of co-operation and competition is not difficult to maintain. Whilst social unity is requisite, knowledge of the individual is paramount. The cohesiveness of groups seems to suggest acculturation - adoption of the values of the group by the individuals - but co-operation need not be in terms of interdependence. Inevitably, in establishing a hierarchy of achievement, certain members will lead others. Teachers should recognise when cross-learning occurs and not intervene.

A group teaching approach differs from an individual one in its

organisation and pre-planning; in stimulating response, interaction and total involvement; and in taking account of wider social and educational implications. It is a question of comparison, imitation and emulation; of using the time in ensemble. Potential teachers should work with an experienced group teacher over a period of time. Present instrumental teaching courses and diplomas were considered inadequate and subsequent changes in training were foreseen. At junior school level the comparison between group and classroom teachers reached a middle point.

Group teaching can go beyond the elementary stages but it may not suffice for all purposes. Motivation is one of the most significant aspects group work can offer.

Group tuition may enable a wide range of skills to be taught; it alerts students at an early stage to the possibilities of ensemble work. Irrespective of whether a student is taught individually or in a group he should be taught how to practise; group playing, however, may motivate practice. The question of rhythmic sensitivity elicited only equivocal answers. The outcomes emphasised attitudes rather than knowledge and musical skills. Standard, it was suggested, was not created by rigorous training alone; the process by which students become proficient they themselves may not understand. Group teaching can meet the needs of the individual; individuality is heightened by the presence of other individuals. Assessment should therefore be in terms of the individual.

In essence the data in this section, like those of the case studies, are of a kind which is publicly accessible rather than of the recherché type of conventional research, read only by an in-group and which remains remote from most teachers. Indeed, the impenetrability of much research is a cause for some concern.

Similarly, using a case study technique kept the work in touch with

reality and the problems which exist in any social situation. Perhaps the most worrying of these was the case of Sarah. Here was a girl to whom the thought of playing in front of someone struck up in her what appeared to be little short of abject terror. Whether or not she would have fared better in a group, where instead of the one-to-one setting conducted in vacuo, regular contact with other players may have reduced her anxiety, is hypothetical though all the indications would seem to suggest that she might. Further, group experience may have provided both a frame of reference by which to measure her progress and, additionally, have opened up new horizons. In a group she could scarcely have avoided making comparisons. Despite her teacher's concern to draw her out, the lessons Sarah received offered her little solace, but then Sarah's was an extreme example.

We looked at such specific examples earlier so here, culled from the case studies in toto, are some generalities:

The two types of lessons differed in at least three ways. Firstly, in one-to-one lessons the roles of 'sender' and 'receiver' of information were clearly defined. Secondly, successful group lessons were characterised by the sorts of tasks set by the teacher, those essentially suited to a group response. Thirdly, they differed in the kinds of learning transactions that occurred and in the overall interactive pattern. We might look more closely at the teaching procedures deployed.

In successful group lessons teachers acknowledged the musical potential of the group setting and sought to capitalize on it. They understood something of the group concept, were aware of the musical and educational possibilities of social interaction. They recognised the learning transactions that occurred between pupil and pupil as well as

those from teacher to pupils. They drew on the diversity of the group. They fostered an atmosphere qualitatively different from that of a one-to-one situation by adopting an approach conducive to discovery learning. They made lateral as well as sequential links. They allowed themselves to be sidetracked from time to time, turning unanticipated occurrences to the advantage of the whole group. They engaged and maintained group focus along an unbroken continuum.

The data brought forth by means of the pro formas provided a second thread of evidence and more importantly highlighted meaningful dimensions of group teaching characteristics. For the group/individual comparisons the pro formas made possible, for the sidelights their data threw on the case studies and for countering any inherent bias in reporting them, their use has been effective.

Subjects were observed in vivo rather than on videotape where some measure of inter-observer agreement (reliability) may have been possible, but then the problem would have been where to place the camera, detail being inversely related to the breadth of view obtained. Moreover to say that inter-observer agreement makes the observation more valid is an a priori assumption. As Cooper contends:

> [1] ...high agreement between observers may not mean that they have eliminated their bias: they may simply all have been trained to have the same bias.

Again it comes down to the problems of applying scientific criteria to human behaviour and of a limitless belief in its quantifiability.

As with the transcripts so with the typescripts. Just as misinterpretation was prevented by recording all the interviews on to tape, and by each of the interviewees checking the writer's interpretations, the case study typescripts were read, and amended where necessary, by the

teacher subjects concerned.

We may summarise the main observational findings elicited by means of the pro formas as follows:

Individual and group-taught students received more or less the same spread of time to the various aspects of learning in music, with the exception of notational skills. In spite of group-taught students having received less time in this category, their level of achievement in fluency of notation was disproportionately high. Less satisfying in both settings was the scant time spent in pursuit of musicianship and yet although group-taught students did not spend more lesson time compared with individually-taught students in this category - there were only minimal differences in time between the two settings - their level of musicianship was higher. In particular we were struck by the strong correlation we found between group and individual time spent in the various activities.

Group tuition developed musical learning, as measured by skill acquisition, information and musicianship, at least to the extent of individual tuition; in fact beyond it. Additionally, in group lessons there were higher levels of commitment and of emulation/imitation.

Whilst in both group and individual settings observed, the teachers behaved in similar ways, albeit at a lower level in individual lessons, the greatest differences were found in spontaneity, in fostering discovery learning and in enjoyment.

We have presented much illuminative information about teaching groups. We have come to some conclusions, supported or rebutted some of the earlier hunches and speculations and opened the door for further study. Some of the data confirmed the hypotheses, but some surprised us and were contrary to our expectations. The end product of the study is not merely

a set of findings but, through a methodology that has been a blend of illuminative interviews, case studies and more structured observation, an interpretation of group work that should help us to improve it. An enlightened, pluralistic society looks to more than one approach to teaching, and if one approach suits a teacher more than another, he or she should merely be expressing the preference of someone who has taken the trouble of exploring others. Whilst we would not advocate group tuition as the sole method of music instruction, we feel that it should be part of the instrumental teacher's stock-in-trade, and we would argue that, as an approach, it can be used effectively in a wide range of teaching situations. When all the words and figures are honed down, what single objective statement can we take away from them? Paring our earlier one we arrive at a summation of the empirical findings:

Group lessons are a viable approach to music instruction; many of the advantages would seem to stem from the social interaction inherent in the group setting that purports to provide an ambience conducive to the learning processes and to musicianship. The learning outcomes can match those of individual instruction in skill acquisition, information and musicianship.

All musicians become members of groups of one kind or another. The sorts of groups to which they will eventually belong may vary according to the instruments they play or to their personal tastes in music, but common to all are players' needs to acquire the skills to enable them to join with others in ensemble. Group tuition, sensitively handled, is a natural context in which the skills of playing together can be encouraged and practised.

[1]Cooper, E.S. et al. Direct Observations? Bull. Br. psychol. Soc.27 (1974) p.6

Appendix A Questionnaire design and data collection

Interview questionnaire

Introductory remarks

Firstly, may I thank you for taking part in this interview. As I said in my letter I am researching into group teaching in music at the University of London Institute of Education under the supervision of Professor Keith Swanwick, and as part of this study I am contacting a number of acknowledged group teachers to discuss their approaches to group teaching.

With your approval I would like to record our discussion on cassette rather than attempt to take notes. As a matter of course, and prior to submitting the thesis, a transcript of the interview will be forwarded to you for approval, so there is no need to continuously monitor what you say.

Are there any points you wish to raise before commencing?

1. Antecedents

   When and how did you become interested in group teaching?

   How long have you been teaching in this way?

   How does teaching in groups compare with your previous experience?

   Do you still give individual lessons?

2. Rationale

   How would you define group teaching?

   What are its aims?

   What do you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of a group setting?

3. Organisation

   What methods of selection do you use, if any?

Would you say parental encouragement and support were necessary or merely desirable?

What length do you think group lessons should be?

How frequent should they be?

Do you keep a work diary or record of group activities over a specific period of time?

On average how much time would you say was necessary for the teacher to prepare adequately?

Although groups will differ considerably, can some preparation be applied to most groups?

Is it possible to involve all pupils at all times?

How are you able to cater for varying standards and differing rates of progress within a group?

How are you able to cope with teaching different types of instruments (fingering patterns) (clefs, etc.) in the same lesson?

4. Constitution of the group

What would you say was the optimum size of an instrumental group?

Would age and standard influence its size?

What age-range could be represented in any one group?

Is the group instruction you give of entirely like-instrument type (ie., all clarinets) or is some heterogeneous (perhaps mixed woodwind)?

What use do you make of other instruments?

5. Materials

Ostensibly, the availability of materials for this type of teaching would seem to pose problems. How have you managed to overcome this?

What kind of tutor books, music and materials do you use?

Do you supplement the material by writing tunes and studies to help

solve specific difficulties?

Have you made video or audio tape recordings of your work?

Are there articles on your teaching?

6. Methodology

To what extent are musical games an integral part of the lessons?

To what degree do you use rote and memory learning?

Is improvisation a feature of your approach?

Is singing or sight singing a part of your lessons?

Can you repeat things more often in a group situation?

7. Social interaction

How important is it to hold a balance between co-operation and competition; are there times when there is a natural swing towards one direction or another?

How aware are you of the individual's contribution to the group?

How aware is the individual student of the contribution of others in the group?

Do the players help one another or do they depend on each other?

What are the consequences of a student wishing to discontinue lessons for the rest of the group?

To what degree can members of the group take on a leader role?

Are there times when you could leave the group to itself?

8. Teacher skills

Attempting to teach groups in the same way as an individual has been heavily criticised,but in what ways do the teaching approaches differ?

It has been said that teaching in groups requires skills not normally associated with instrumental teachers, would you accept this?

What would you say were the attributes of a group teacher?

What is the most effective way of learning to teach groups?

What changes would you like to see in the training of instrumental music teachers?

Could the average visiting instrumental teacher become an effective group teacher?

Although the group lesson and the general classroom lesson are clearly not the same, would you consider the teaching skills involved as comparable?

9. Development

Do you see the idea of group teaching going beyond the elementary stages of tuition?

Would you say that once students are beyond the elementary stages they are more manageable taught in smaller groups?

At what stage, if at all, would you advise students to take individual tuition rather than group lessons?

At what stage can group-taught students hold a part on their own either rhythmically or melodically?

Would you say that one of the most significant aspects group tuition can offer is motivation?

10. Learning outcomes

In what ways can a group setting help to widen the range of skills taught?

In addition to the (weekly) lesson and follow-up, do the players participate regularly in other ensembles or music-making activities?

In general would you say that group teaching developed in individuals sound habits of practising on their own?

In your experience are group-taught students more rhythmically sensitive than those who have received individual tuition?

How do you estimate success in group teaching?

fig.8

Interview date and venue log

beginning 19.11.81 ending 23.3.82

Thursday	19th November 1981	Graham Owen	London
Wednesday	25th " "	Yvonne Enoch	Ashford, Kent
Sunday	20th December "	Christine Brown	Leeds
Wednesday	6th January 1982	Kenneth van Barthold	London
"	" " "	Robert Plowright	"
Friday	22nd " "	Jean Horsfall	Trowbridge, Wiltshire
Wednesday	3rd February "	Peter Crump	Leicester
Tuesday	9th " "	Victor Fox	Manchester
Monday	15th " "	Robert Spencer	London
Friday	19th " "	Julia Lee	Harrogate
Wednesday	3rd March "	Sheila Nelson	Tower Hamlets, London
Tuesday	9th " "	Jane Pamment	Pimlico, London
"	" " "	Kenneth McAllister	" "
"	23rd " "	Phyllis Palmer	Cambridge

fig.9
Q-sort card

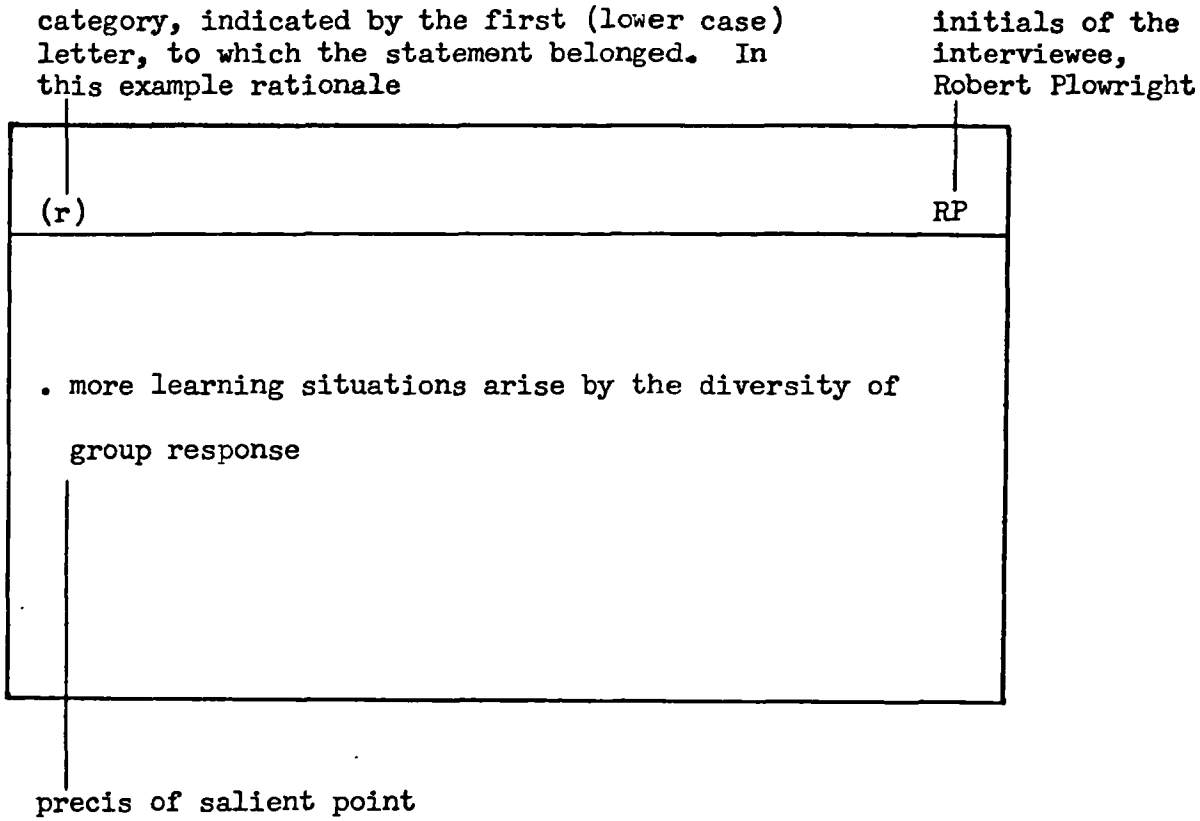
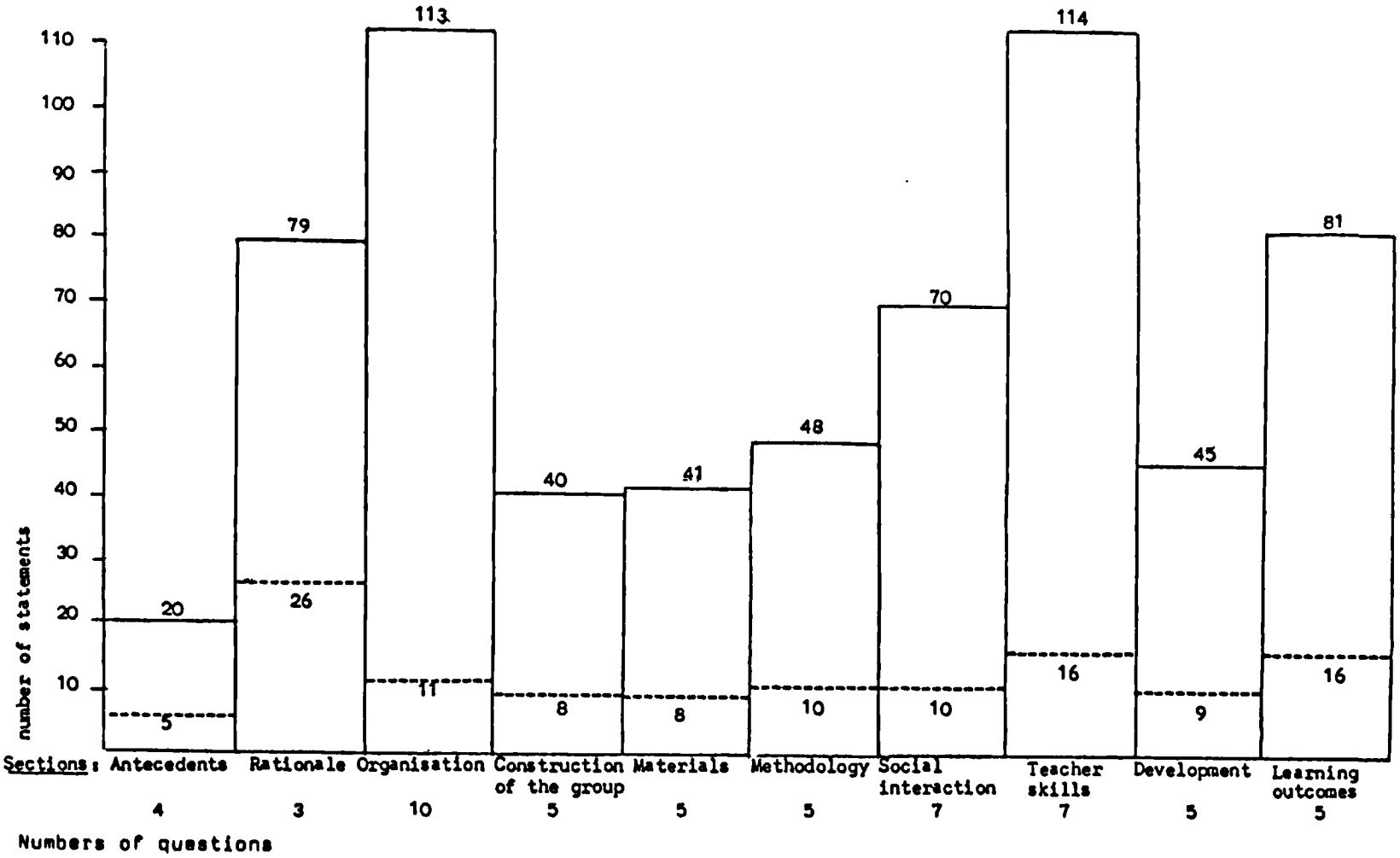


fig.10 Number of statements made by interviewees to successive sections of the questionnaire

651 statements.

------ average number of statements per section



Appendix B Pro formas

University of London Institute of Education Music Dept.

Instrumental activity pro forma

Student code _____ Total lesson time (if different from stated)

Teacher code _____ _____

School code _____ Instrument(s) being taught _____

Observation number _____ Group or individual lesson _____

Date _____ Number in group _____

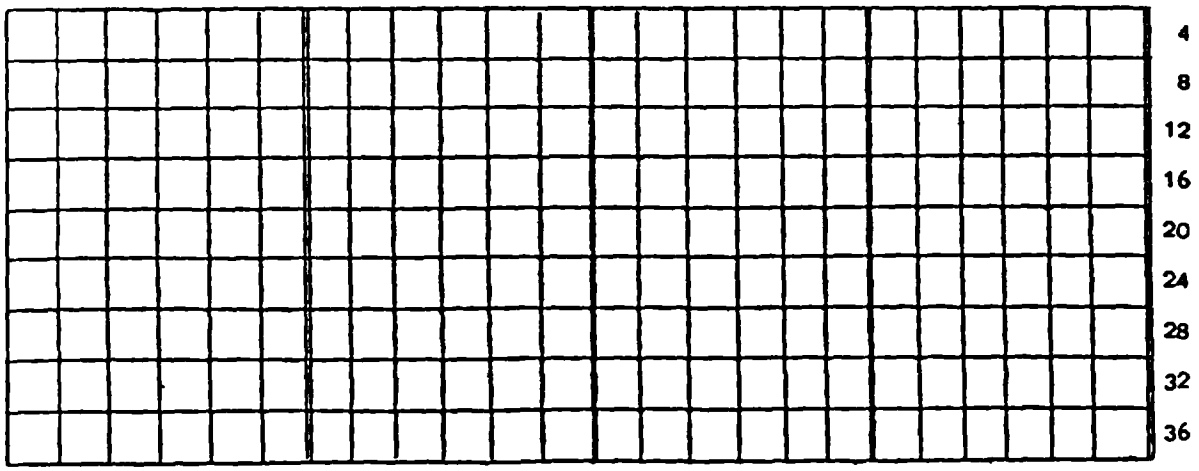
Time: start_____finish_____ Age of individual_____Age range of group_____

Approx. standard(s) _____

---

time spent in acquisition of skills	i	aural	Sa
	ii	manipulative	Sm
	iii	notation	Sn
time spent in disseminating information	i	historical & social	Ih
	ii	technical	It
time spent attending to musicianship (interpretation)	i	structure	Ms
	ii	expressive character	Me
time spent in setting up and packing away			P
time spent off-task (inappropriate student behaviour; talking to another; interrupting the learning situation; daydreaming or being generally inattentive)			O

consecutive 10 second intervals



time is recorded by writing the code Sa or Sm etc. in each successive ten-second interval.

Kevin Thompson

University of London Institute of Education Music Dept

Student observation pro forma

Student code _____
Teacher code _____
School code _____
Observation number _____
Date __ : __ : __

Time: start _____ finish _____
Total lesson time (if different from above)
_____
Instrument(s) being taught _____
Group or individual lesson _____
Number in group _____
Age of individual _____
Age range of group _____
Approx. standard _____

---

i. continuance/discontinuance
ii. transfer to other musical settings

} ascertain through discussion with the teacher

---

iii. estimate from observation - indicated by use of a 7-point scale based on the following criteria:-

levels of commitment

7 very attentive - strongly focused attention displaying initiative and a sense of positive commitment	6 attentive - positive attention through not displaying initiative	5 fairly attentive - displaying some attention for most of the time	4 neither attentive nor inattentive - passive and seemingly apathetic

3 fairly inattentive - displaying some inattention for most of the time	2 inattentive - 'positively' inattentive	1 very inattentive - disinterested to the point of disruption

			high						low
acquisition of skills	i	aural discrimination	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	ii	manipulative	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	iii	fluency of notation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
musicianship (interpretation)	i	structure (acquisition of musical line; relating similar shaped phrases, sequencing; portraying an overall sense of form)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	ii	expressive character (tone colour; vibrato; rubato; staccato; legato; choice of tempi; dynamics)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
information	i	technical vocabulary	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	ii	historical and social perspectives	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
social interaction (*group lessons only)	*	competitiveness	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	*	co-operativeness	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
		emulation/imitation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	*	peer assessment	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
		enjoyment factor	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Any other comments

Kevin Thompson

University of London Institute of Education Music Dept.

Teacher observation pro forma

Teacher code _____
Student code _____
School code _____
Observation number _____
Date ___ : ___ : ___
Time: Start _____ Finish _____

Total lesson time (if different from stated) _____
Instrument(s) being taught _____
Group or individual lesson _____
Number in group _____
Age of individual _____
Age range of group _____
Approx. standard(s) _____

Items against which value judgements are made:-

dynamic (adynamic)		efficient use of lesson time (inefficient)	
sense of high involvement (low)		degree of heuristic learning (direct instruction)	
degree of interaction (isolation)		degree of approvals (disapprovals)	
awareness of individual(s) (unawareness)		compelling way of presentation (prosaic)	
positive atmosphere of anticipation (negative)		fast rate of presentation (slow)	
sense of momentum engendered (static)		high level of repetition (low)	
consistency (inconsistency)		appropriateness of material (inappropriateness)	
preparedness (unpreparedness)		adaptation of material for diverse abilities (non adaptation)	
organisation (disorganisation)		strong sense of commitment (weak)	
degree of spontaneity (constraint)		high level of enjoyment (low)	

7-point scale 1 - 7 (low to high)

Teachers immediate response to the success/failure of the lesson _____

Any other comments _____

Kevin Thompson

Appendix C Empirical data

Table 1

Percentage, rounded to the nearest whole figure, of time spent in each activity over the four-week period for the four teachers combined.

		Group	Individual
time spent in acquisition of skills	i aural	19	14
	ii manipulative	25	26
	iii notational	7	18
time spent in disseminating information	i historical & social	1	0
	ii technical	28	25
time spent attending to musicianship (interpretation)	i structure	2	2
	ii expressive character	1	2
time spent in setting up and packing away		17	14
time spent off-task (inappropriate student behaviour; talking to another; interrupting the learning situation; day dreaming or being generally inattentive)		1	1

(Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Co-efficient)

rho = .89 (0.01 significance level)

fig.11

Diagram showing the spread of time given to the various aspects of learning in music in group and individual settings

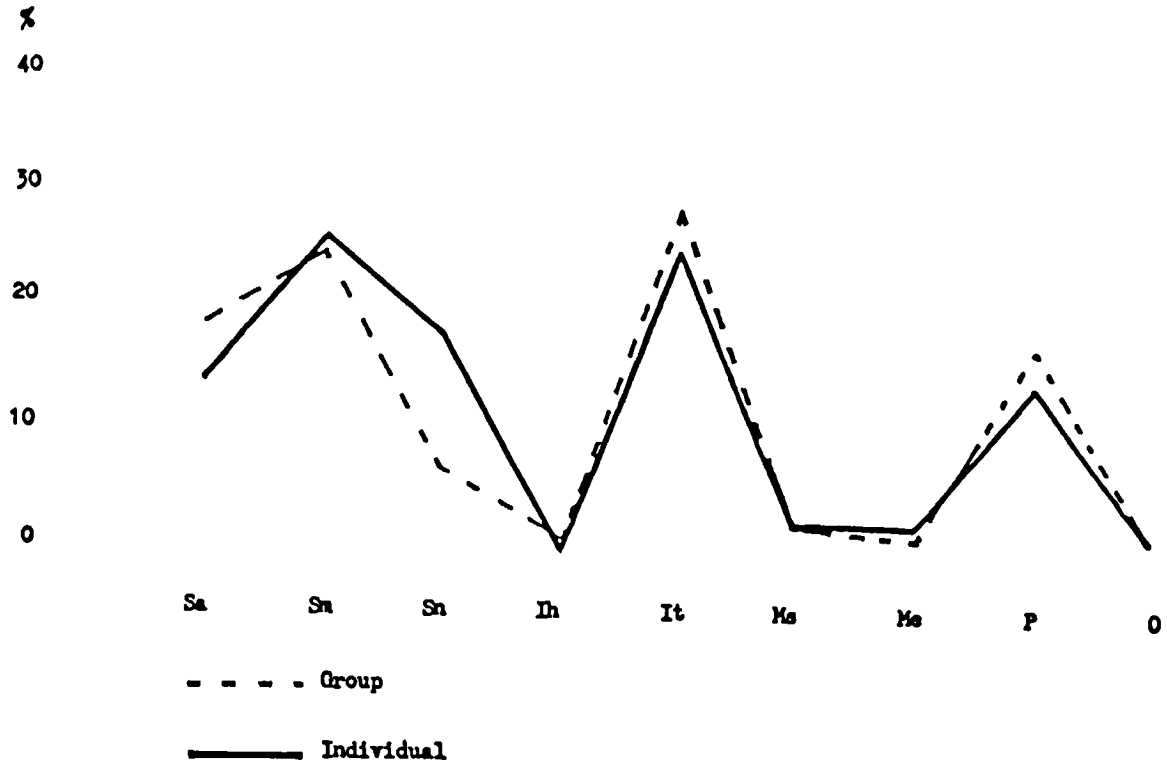


Table 2 - Student Observation

N = 15

acquisition of skills																							
I Aural Discrimination				II Manipulative				III Fluency of Notation				information* I Technical Vocabulary				musicianship I Structure				II Expressive Character			
Group	Indiv	D	R	Group	Indiv	D	R	Group	Indiv	D	R	Group	Indiv	D	R	Group	Indiv	D	R	Group	Indiv	D	R
3	2	-1	4	3	2	-1	4.5	3	1	-2	7.5	4	4			6	2	-4	12.5	5	2	-3	11
2	1	-1	4	3	2	-1	4.5	2	2			2	2			2	3	+1	3.5	2	2		
6	3	-3	13	2	3	+1	4.5	2	2			3	5	+2	7	3	5	+2	8.5	4	5	+1	4
4	3	-1	4	3	3			3	2	-1	3	7	6	-1	3	6	2	-4	12.5	6	3	-3	11
3	2	-1	4	3	2	-1	4.5	3	1	-2	7.5	2	1	-1	3	2	1	-1	3.5	1	1		
3	2	-1	4	3	2	-1	4.5	3	2	-1	3	2	1	-1	3	3	1	-2	8.5	2	1	-1	4
2	3	+1	4	4	4			3	3			2	2			2	5	+3	11	2	6	+4	13
3	3			4	2	-2	10	3	5	+2	7.5	3	5	+2	7	2	2			3	4	+1	4
0	4	-2	10	5	4	-1	4.5	6	5	-1	3	3	2	-1	3	2	1	-1	3.5	2	1	-1	4
3	2	-1	4	2	3	+1	4.5	3	2	-1	3	2	2			2	1	-1	3.5	2	1	-1	4
4	6	+2	10	3	5	+2	10	3	5	+2	7.5	2	2			5	3	-2	8.5	5	3	-2	8.5
6	4	-2	10	5	2	-3	12	7	3	-4	11	2	2			3	2	-1	3.5	3	2	-1	4
5	5			5	4	-1	4.5	4	3	-1	3	5	3	-2	7	5	4	-1	3.5	5	3	-2	8.5
4	6	+2	10	4	4			4	4			4	5	+1	3	4	4			3	4	+1	4
0	4	-2	10	6	4	-2	10	7	4	-3	10	7	4	-3	9	6	4	-2	8.5	6	3	-3	11
$\bar{d}$ = -0.66		s_d = 1.39		$\bar{d}$ = -0.6		s_d = 1.25		$\bar{d}$ = -0.8		s_d = 1.55		$\bar{d}$ = -0.26		s_d = 1.28		$\bar{d}$ = -0.86		s_d = 1.82		$\bar{d}$ = -0.4		s_d = 1.97	
t = 1.78		p < .05		t = 1.79		p < .05		t = 1.93		p < .05		t = -0.77		not significant		t = -1.78		p < .05		t = -0.75		not significant	

Overall (N - 90)

$\bar{d}$ = -0.6 s_d = 1.59 t = 3.55 p < .001

*footnote The historical and social perspectives category was due to insufficient instances barely discernible and was subsequently omitted from the pro forma.

Table 3 - Student Observation

N = 15

Levels of Commitment

Group 6	Indiv 6	D	R
6	3	-3	10
6	7	+1	4
5	5		
6	5	-1	4
5	4	-1	4
4	7	+3	10
6	5	-1	4
7	6	-1	4
6	5	-1	4
5	7	+2	8
7	4	-3	10
6	5	-1	4
5	5		
6	6		

$\bar{d} = -0.4$ $s_d = 1.54$

$t = -0.97$

no significant difference

(between the two groups)

N = 15

Emulation/Imitation

Group 5	Indiv 5	D	R
5	2	-3	10.5
5	4	-1	2.5
6	4	-2	6.5
5	2	-3	10.5
3	2	-1	2.5
3	2	-1	2.5
5	4	-1	2.5
6	6		
4	2	-2	6.5
5	2	-3	10.5
5	2	-3	10.5
6	4	-2	6.5
5	3	-2	6.5
7	3	-4	13

$\bar{d} = -1.86$ $s_d = 1.12$

$t = 6.16$ $p < .001$

(highly significant)

Table 4

Teacher Observation Totals (percentages)

	1 Group Score	2 Ind. Score	3 Rank 1	4 Rank 2	5 D	6 D^2
dynamic (adynamic)	77	67	14	13	1	1
sense of high involvement (low)	84	78	7	6	1	1
degree of interaction (isolation)	86	75	5	9	4	16
awareness of individual (unawareness)	89	82	1	1	-	-
positive atmosphere of anticipation (negative)	76	64	15	17	2	4
sense of momentum engendered (static)	76	64	15	17	2	4
consistency (inconsistency)	81	78	12	6	6	36
preparedness (unpreparedness)	87	81	3	3	-	-
organisation (disorganisation)	86	80	5	4	1	1
degree of spontaneity (constraint)	82	65	10	15	5	25
efficient use of lesson time (inefficient)	83	82	9	1	8	64
degree of heuristic learning (direct instruction)	82	66	10	14	4	16
degree of approvals (disapprovals)	81	69	12	12	-	-
compelling way of presentation (prosaic)	75	65	18	15	3	9
fast rate of presentation (slow)	72	63	20	19	1	1
high level of repetition (low)	76	70	15	11	4	16
appropriateness of material (inappropriateness)	84	78	7	6	1	1
adaption of material for diverse abilities (non adaption)	74	62	19	20	1	1
strong sense of commitment (weak)	88	80	2	4	2	4
high level of enjoyment (low)	87	72	3	10	7	49
						249
						x 6
						1494

No. of $Pair^2$ - 1 (20 x 400 (-1) = 7980

$\frac{1494}{7980}$ = 0.187 (0.19)

rho = 1 minus 0.19 = $\underline{0.81}$ $p < .01$

Although the patterns of group and individual scores correlate strongly, a sign test confirms a significant difference of $p < .01$

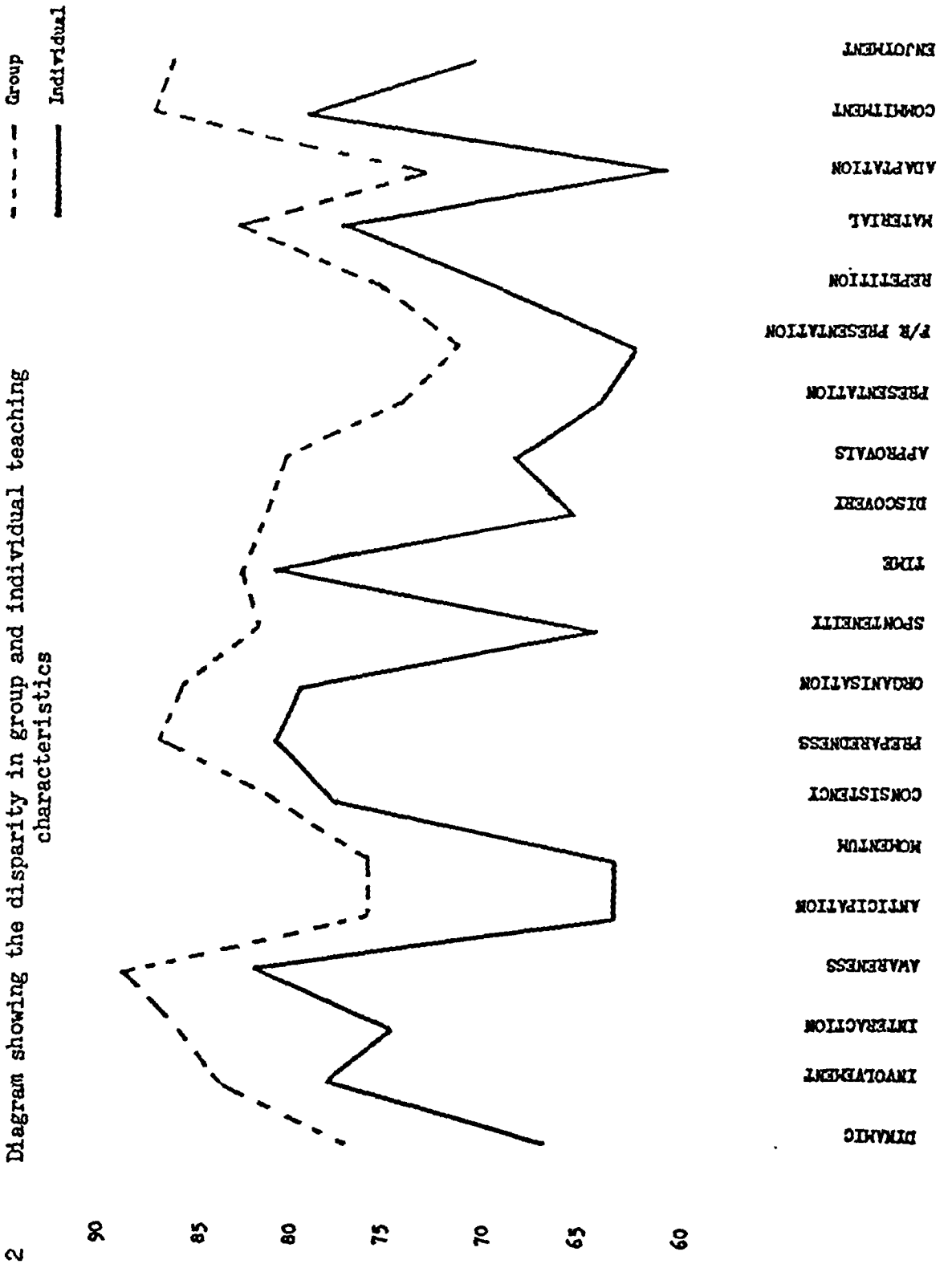


fig.12 Diagram showing the disparity in group and individual teaching characteristics

Table 5

Teacher observation scores across twenty constructs

	CA								GR								PL								DB							
	lessons 1		2		3		4		lessons 1		2		3		4		lessons 1		2		3		4		lessons 1		2		3		4	
	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I	G	I
dynamic (adynamic)	6	6	6	5	5	4	6	5	4	4	6	5	6	4	6		4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	4
sense of high involvement (low)	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	4	6	5	7		6	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6
degree of interaction (isolation)	6	6	6	5	6	4	7	5	6	5	6	5	6	4	6		6	6	5	5	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	7	5	6	5
awareness of individual(s)(unawareness)	6	6	6	6	6	7	6	6	5	6	5	7	5	6			6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6
positive atmosphere of anticipation (negative)	6	4	5	4	6	4	6	5	5	5	6	5	6	5	5		4	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	6	5	6	5	6	3	5	4
sense of momentum engendered (static)	6	5	5	4	6	4	5	5	5	4	6	5	5	5	5		5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	3	4
consistency (inconsistency)	5	4	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	6		5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	5	6	6	6	6
preparedness (unpreparedness)	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	7			6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	7	6	6	6
organisation (disorganisation)	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	6			6	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	7	6	7	6
degree of spontaneity (constraint)	6	5	6	4	7	4	6	6	6	4	5	5	4	4	5		5	5	5	5	5	4	6	5	6	5	7	4	7	4	6	4
efficient use of lesson time (inefficient)	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6			6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	5
degree of heuristic learning (direct instruction)	6	5	5	4	6	4	6	5	5	5	6	4	5	4	6		6	7	5	4	5	4	5	4	6	7	7	5	7	4	6	4
degree of approvals (disapprovals)	7	6	5	5	6	5	6	5	6	4	4	4	6	6	5		5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	6	5	7	2	5	4
compelling way of presentation (prosaic)	5	5	5	4	5	4	6	5	5	4	5	5	5	5			4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	6	5	6	5	7	4	5	4
fast rate of presentation (slow)	4	6	5	4	6	4	5	4	5	3	5	5	4	4	5		5	6	4	5	5	6	5	4	5	6	6	4	7	3	5	3
high level of repetition (low)	6	7	5	5	5	4	6	5	6	5	4	5	5	5			5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	6	5	6	5	6	4	6	4
appropriateness of material (inappropriateness)	5	6	5	5	6	4	6	6	6	5	6	4	6	5	6		5	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	7	6	6	6
adaptation of material for diverse abilities (non adaptation)	4	5	4	4	5	4	6	4	6	4	5	4	4	4	5		6	5	5	4	6	4	5	4	6	6	5	5	6	4	5	4
strong sense of commitment (weak)	6	6	6	5	6	5	7	6	6	6	6	5	6	5	6		6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	5	7	6	7	5	7	5
high level of enjoyment (low)	6	6	6	5	6	5	7	5	6	4	6	4	6	5	6		6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	7	5	7	2	6	5

Lesson No

CA	(113)	(108)	(117)	(122)
Group(460) - 82%	(110)	(98)	(94)	(104)
Indiv (406) - 73%				
GR	(112)	(112)	(111)	(114)
Group(449) - 80%	(92)	(95)	(99)	-
Indiv (285) - 68%				
PL	(107)	(100)	(110)	(103)
Group(420) - 75%	(108)	(103)	(105)	(105)
Indiv (421) - 75%				
DB	(118)	(121)	(132)	(116)
Group (487) - 87%	(115)	(105)	(87)	(95)
Indiv (402) - 72%				

Total (866) - 77%	(734) - 75%
(841) - 75%	(889) - 79%

Note on Tables 6 and 7 (overleaf)

The total figures for Solihull fall into a pattern which steadily increases and reaches a climax point in the final year of primary education thereafter declining until at fifth year secondary level, there are fewer students continuing to take lessons than there are at infant stage beginning. At sixth form and technical college level there is a slight increase in numbers.

The pattern charted by the total number of pupils receiving instrumental lessons in Sandwell, reaches a peak during the first year of secondary school and declines thereafter. Note the drop in numbers between third and fourth year of primary education.

Appendix D Instrumental music in two LEA's

Table 6

PUPILS RECEIVING INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS IN SOLIHULL AUTUMN 1982

YEAR	BRASS	STRINGS	WOODWIND	TOTAL
Infant	-	43	-	43
Junior 1	13	88	3	104
Junior 2	49	146	38	233
Junior 3	120	124	180	424
Junior 4	129	120	183	432
(SUB TOTAL)	(311)	(521)	(404)	(1236)
50 of these pupils pay at Music Centres				
Secondary 1	71	86	146	303
Secondary 2	66	43	86	195
Secondary 3	38	25	64	127
Secondary 4	23	15	60	98
Secondary 5	9	5	20	34
6th Form College & Tech. College	12	16	22	50
(SUB TOTAL)	(219)	(190)	(398)	(807)
+ 50 Paying Pupils from Primary Sector				
FINAL TOTAL	530	711	802	2043
STAFF	5 Full Time	5 Full Time	6 Full Time	
	+ Co-ordinator	+ 1 Part Time .2	+ 2 Part Time .5	

Table 7

PUPILS RECEIVING INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS IN SANDWELL SPRING 1983

YEAR	BRASS	STRINGS	WOODWIND	TOTAL
Infant	2	4	0	6
Junior 1	45	82	28	155
" 2	213	143	49	405
" 3	207	159	72	438
" 4	194	163	72	429
(SUB TOTAL)	(661)	(551)	(221)	1433
Secondary 1	207	152	126	485
" 2	102	88	81	271
" 3	81.	63	63	207
" 4	57	43	60	160
" 5	24	30	38	92
6	11	10	30	51
(SUB TOTAL)	(482)	(386)	(398)	1266
FINAL TOTAL	1143	937	619	2699
STAFF	7 Full Time	8 Full Time	7 Full Time	
	2,2/5 Part Time	3 Part Time	2/5 Part Time	
	Head of Department	Head of Department		

Appendix E Letters

Letter drafted to make preliminary contact with prospective interviewee

K. and P. A. Thompson
29 Dunlon Hall Road
Shirley
Solihull
B90 2RA
Telephone 021 745 4397

28th October 1981

Miss Christine Brown,
10A Chandos Gardens,
LEEDS

Dear Miss Brown,

I am currently undertaking research into group teaching in music at the University of London Institute of Education under the supervision of Professor Keith Swanwick. As part of this study, I am contacting a number of established group teachers to discuss their approaches to teaching groups, since relatively little seems to be known about the valuable work taking place. Therefore, I would be most grateful if you could spare an hour of your time to talk with me. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your reply and hope that you may be willing to take part.

With grateful thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Thompson

Kevin Thompson

Covering letter for return of transcript for retrospective editing

K. and P. A. Thompson
29 Dunton Hall Road
Shirley
Solihull
B90 2RA
Telephone 021 745 4397

11th March 1982

Mr. Kenneth van Barthold,
The City Lit Centre for Adult Studies,
Keeley House,
LONDON WC2B 4BA

Dear Mr. van Barthold,

I enclose a transcript of your interview for you to check. As you will see I have substituted the odd word here and there to avoid repetition or ambiguity but please feel free to change anything that has been misunderstood or that you are unhappy about. I am particularly concerned that I have interpreted your thoughts correctly as I am convinced that the interview will be a valuable contribution to the project. Naturally any release of the material for publication would necessarily be negotiated with you.

I would be grateful if you could return the amended transcript using the envelope and postage provided.

Again, thank you for sparing some of your valuable time. I shall keep you informed.

Veuillez vérifier le français. Je suis certain que le vôtre est meilleur que le mien!

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Thompson

Kevin Thompson

Prefatory note to appendices F and G

In the remaining two appendices we move from teaching groups in this country to two models of group tuition as practised abroad - though one is but a representative of that country here in Britaim. By placing the models side by side in this way, some of the challengimg differences between each of them and between our own may be thrown into sharper relief. It should not be assumed, however, that the two models are quite incompatible. It would be possible - and indeed desirable - to be eclectic.

Three strata of education are encompassed: primary and secondary in the American School; higher education in the Paris Conservatoire. In the higher education sector, it is necessary to look abroad at a group teaching model, together with the social milieu in which it functions since presently parallels within the music colleges of this country do not exist.

Appendix F

A contemporary view of the ethos and rationale of the 'atelier' system of class tuition at the Paris Conservatoire

In Paris, advertisement copy extolls the virtue of furniture made in the 'atelier of Galeries Lafayette'; outside the entrance to a Montparnasse art school separate wall plaques itemise the distinguished staff, 'atelier Yves Brayer', 'atelier Michel Rodde', 'atelier Pierre Jerome'; in the Georges Pompidou Centre a programme of forthcoming IRCAM activities details 'ateliers and concerts.' Atelier, studio or workshop, as can be deduced from this assemblage of images, is a favourite word; it is also a valid concept of what class tuition at the Conservatoire is about.

The philosophy underpinning the atelier idea was born of the turmoil of the 1790's, out of the prevailing mood and ethos of the years immediately following the French Revolution when the Conservatoire was founded. It was in such a climate that the much vaunted atelier approach to teaching music was implemented. It had to do with liberation, idealism and equality. In essence the rationale is fairly straightforward: collectively highly-motivated, talented students stimulate and learn intuitively from each other and so reach a new high. It has little to do with the notion of apprenticeship to a master as we understand it in this country, still less with group psychology - yet there are obvious parallels with both.

At the Conservatoire the professors teach their students individually albeit in a group yet what takes place is more than merely an individual lesson given in the presence of others. One wonders to what extent

students learn more by being exposed to an ethos of excellence, created through and around a professor's class, than from direct instruction. One of the most enriching aspects of the system would seem to be the motivation of gifted students being with others like-minded, though lesser mortals might find it difficult to thrive in such a milieu.

From the day that a professor is appointed he is solely responsible for his class and neither the Principal nor anyone else intervenes. There is no stated curriculum though from time to time curricula may be discussed in broad terms by senior academic staff. Each professor decides what his classes will study carte blanche; each has his own method of teaching.

Although the internal structure of the courses is left entirely to the professorial staff in charge of the various disciplines, there are almost always changes being made overall to the 'grand design'. There is a teaching council (conseil pédagogique) which from time to time reviews the courses on offer and, without impinging on departmental autonomy, reorders the total curriculum. A decade ago there were major reforms, instigated by the Principal, Raymond Gallois Montbrun, of the award system. Previously the awards given by the Conservatoire consisted of first and second certificates of merit competed for in public after one or two years of study respectively, and first and second prizes both of which were - and still are - leaving awards. The certificates of merit were abolished as they were considered no longer necessary since students left only with first or second prize. The Conservatoire has tried to direct its teaching towards greater in-depth study over a longer period and has concentrated on broadening the outlook of its students since, in a drive against élitism, charges were levelled that it was too

preoccupied with shaping virtuosi, with a curriculum unduly restrictive concerned only with technique, agility and with instilling competitiveness. In consequence, nowadays the emphasis is on creating complete, all-round musicians; students compete in public less early than they did, though there are still end of year examinations and certificates of merit in some disciplines.

Among other innovations of the Principal is the third cycle or cycle de perfectionnement. This cycle is not sanctioned for awards, if it were it would devalue the first prize which remains the ultimate accolade. Not surprisingly the Labèque sisters, Katia and Marielle each gained first prize, 'Premier Prix du Conservatoire de Paris'. The third cycle is an additional course for those students who wish to prepare for careers as soloists and who seem to be amongst the most gifted. Entry to this relatively new course is by open competition. Once accepted students prepare for international competitions and virtuoso careers by continuing to study their repertoire with an orchestra made up of first-prize winners who are currently completing their professional training courses.

Under the general direction of M. Gallois Montbrun there are three distinct departments, each with its own adviser. Claude Pascal deals mainly with piano, violin, chamber music and solo instruments of the cycle de perfectionnement; Alain Wéber with the more intellectual side, erudition, analysis, history of music and piano accompaniment; and Jean-Michel Damase with orchestral instruments, woodwind, brass and percussion in addition to guitar, singing, dancing and 'disciplines of the stage.'

Whilst the Conservatoire cannot guarantee jobs for students at the

end of their courses of study, the prospects are encouraging. Past students have found their way into orchestras, opera houses, ballet companies, music publishing, recording, radio and television; some have taken up lectureships in music, others have become music archivists, or have established themselves as composers, critics or soloists.

The Conservatoire auditions only candidates who have already reached a high standard and serious preparation for the rigorous entrance auditions is therefore essential. Help with preparation for entry can be sought from town and regional schools of music. Within the last two years the existence of a second Conservatoire at Lyons could be said to provide some measure of competition to secure the most able students, though the international reputation and kudos of Paris still holds good. Having the status of student of the Conservatoire carries with it prestige. There is an identity, an esprit de corps. Although the students regard themselves as products of an egalitarian society they are nevertheless an elite. Excellence is after all undemocratic. There is, however, room enough for two major Conservatoires and Jean-Michel Damase is in no doubt as to the long term benefits of a second; he sees any competitiveness between the two as 'bracing'.

Where there are several professors of the same discipline, students may on entry choose to study with a certain professor perhaps to continue with a particular technique or approach. On the proviso that the professor agrees and that there are vacancies within his group, the new entrants are accommodated.

There is a collegiate atmosphere. Students feel they belong to l'écurie (the stable) of a certain professor. Formerly, two renowned professors of piano at the Conservatoire, Marguerite Long and Alfred Cortot each taught by wholly dissimilar approaches; students of one had completely

different hand positions to students of the other. Neither approach represented a Conservatoire line, both were equally valid. It was, nevertheless, essential that students whom prior to entry had been taught by one or other approach should continue in the way that they were accustomed.

Students come to Paris from almost every town in France, towns in which each one of them might well be considered a virtuoso. Once admitted to the Conservatoire a student is merely someone who plays well amongst others who play equally well. M. Damase believes that that creates a mental attitude in which there is, to some extent, a level of confrontation towards 'prima donnas from the different towns.'

Early in the history of the Conservatoire it was thought that for the 'flourishing of French art' foreign students ought to be admitted. The regulations of the time did not allow Cherubini, erstwhile Principal, to accept the young Liszt because he was Hungarian. After this refusal Cherubini obtained permission for two foreign students to be admitted to each class free of charge and Fauré increased this number to three. Today, ratios of French to foreign students are detailed for all to see in the prospectus - it is difficult to generalise. In all, 1200 students are divided among 130 classes with on average eight students in each class. Children aged ten to mature students of thirty are included in its number.

Full-time professorial staff work twelve hours per week, each professor being free to apportion the time as he or she wishes. Some teach four three hour sessions, others - and this is by far the most common way of working - teach three four hour sessions from two in the afternoon until six o'clock. A few prefer two 'long' days of six hours each. Naturally no single student could possibly afford the time to be

present for the full twelve hours, there are other lessons to attend and practice has to be done. Most students attend class twice a week and stay for several hours to hear friends and enrich their repertoire.

Some professors, especially those who teach piano, have an assistant known as a répétiteur/répétitrice. It is not assumed that the students must be put in front of a professor all or nearly all of the time they are at the Conservatoire. The assistant works with students in order to reserve the professor's time for interpretation and final homing of the pieces. This relatively recent role of assistant came about after some students began to pay for private lessons in addition to attending the group lessons provided by the Conservatoire. Taking private, fee paying lessons, is forbidden by current regulations; in any case students have very full timetables and would rarely have time to prepare work for two teachers. The alma mater image of the Conservatoire is implicit: 'the Conservatoire' says M. Damase 'takes you in hand, it looks after you.'

Despite the uncompromising tone of the prospectus - more accurately a detailed list of regulations - and the austerity of the building, a former Jesuit seminary, the Conservatoire does not seem aridly formalised. There is an old ethic of excellence in contrast to a newer ethic of relativism. The general tenor is authoritative yet hardly authoritarian as is borne out in the following account.

For reason of resonance - it is emphasised - as opposed to being out of earshot of other classes, the trumpet class convenes at two o'clock in the intimate Théâtre Tristan Bernard only a short distance from the main building and away from the constant accompaniment of the congested multisonous corridors. After the spartan rooms of the Conservatoire the luxurious theatre seems like an aberration. Eight students occupy the

back row of the stalls whilst the professor, the celebrated trumpeter Pierre Thibaud, sits immediately in front of them. The students are as diverse and as biddable as any though at first glance all appear to be male, one no more than a boy,the others mature adults older perhaps than their British counterparts. Antoine is first on. He leaves by a side door and reappears centre stage where - music stand borne ahead of him and set down by another willing student - he proceeds to readjust both music stand and embouchure. In a state of readiness he nods politely to the professor and, without any apparent need to warm up, begins to play with considerable aplomb the difficult arpeggio study from Etudes Transcendantes by Theo Charlier (Alphonse Leduc). 'Egal' (even) remarks the professor almost as an aside in voice barely audible. Antoine clearly attuned to the dynamics of the professor's undertones amends his uneven, lumpy quavers. 'Net' (clean) adds the professor 'c'est tout approximatif' (it's all too approximate). He imitates his student's braying 'waw-waw, waw-waw' sounds. He says that the syllable for precise articulation should not be 'waw' but 'peem'; strange that exactly the same word is used in this country. There has always been a commonality between French and English trumpeters and cornetists which stems directly from Arban, sometime professor of cornet at the Conservatoire. His seminal tutor has sold and still sells in vast quantities. M. Thibaud: 'comme des cloches' (like a bell). The student begins to articulate each note cleanly. After twenty minutes or so of this, Antoine restarts the study and continues without further interruption.

Joseph, smallest of the group and disconcertingly boyish, plays a B flat trumpet; the rest play on C instruments. His sound is less vibrant, mellow like a cornet. The piece is a tour de force and Joseph plays with

flawless, breathtaking precision. He is allowed to play on where Antoine was stopped and corrected. Joseph's performance gives a baseline from which others can be compared. The professor, much taken with the performance, is quick to compliment but asks why he rushed the end. Joseph smiles conspiratorially, his motive, a display of skill in front of his colleagues is clear to all. It would be interesting to know whether his performance yields results next lesson from the others. Davide follows. After some affected Chaplinesque clowning he proceeds to play himself in with several languid lip slurs. Launching into a contemporary study in double-quick time he overshoots some of the upper harmonics. The professor corrects him by singing the passage in solfège. Davide, repeating the passage at a reduced tempo, sets about putting right his mistakes; 'écoute' (listen) intones the professor. Towards the end of the session a pretty female enters from the wings carrying trumpet and music. 'You are a beautiful girl,' enunciates M. Thibaud in measured English spoken with irresistible Gallic charm said, presumably, to make the writer sit up and take notice of the fact that the trumpet class is not the sole preserve of male students. She begins to play less confidently than the boys but musically. M. Thibaud makes some concessions, 'Pas triste' (not sad) he calls.

Individual, highly personal skills are being taught in the class apparently with little if any loss of individuality in the interests of conformism; an approach which, on the face of it, could be acceptable in our own major music teaching institutions. Each student's technique is slightly different from another's, the quality of sounds noticeably so, though all bear the imprint of Pierre Thibaud or Maurice André and could be said to be French in tone colour. As such the lesson is a rebuttal of

the nonsense that brass players cannot successfully be taught within a class. At five o'clock the students with due regard to protocol, shake hands with M. Thibaud. In the chandeliered portal one-by-one he takes them aside to make parting remarks . . .

Appendix G

The curricular instrumental programme at the American School in London

At 8.30 class commences at the American School in London. Down through a labyrinth of corridors we follow sounds to the music department, en route, a sort of musical mélange. We chance upon choral classes, knots of people playing in ensemble, and excuse ourselves as we pass quickly through an anteroom where there is a lesson in progress, the class comprising a violinist and a double bass player who appear to be reading from the same music, but more of that anon. It seems incredulous, an American school - run on American lines - reinstalled in London.

All told there are at ASL fourteen performing groups including choirs, a madrigal group, four 'grade' (year-group) bands, stage and concert bands, and a string orchestra, each scheduled within the mainstream of the curriculum. Apropos of that the question may justifiably be put: how are all these activities fitted into the timetable? At first the writer's question is deflected with some style: 'with a shoehorn', comes the reply. Later it is explained that space on the timetable is made by a system of options. Pupils attend general music classes until the age of ten; thereafter all musical activities are elective. ASL is an enabling institution. Those wishing to take instrumental music may do so but, as some of the pupils as a result of their parents' temporary residence in this country stay only two or maybe three semesters, (a semester is normally half of the academic year) the staff prefer them not to start too late. Whilst there is no form of selection, guidance is given as to the individual's suitability for a particular instrument. The staff might suggest to a pupil whose lips are too thick for the trumpet that he may be

happier on the baritone but should he have a burning ambition to play the trumpet then the staff acquiesce. Many pupils continue to play after leaving school. Some, whilst perhaps not majoring in music, will include it in their university or college courses. ASL alumni have gone on to the most prestigious north-eastern state universities - Harvard, Princeton and Yale. There is at ASL a 'preppie', Ivy League image.

The school, nestling unobtrusively in St. John's Wood, is private, that is independent and fee-paying, as opposed to public which in the American sense of the term is literally public. Unlike many music faculty staff in high schools in the 'States, the music staff at the American School in London does not have the millstone of providing half-time entertainment at football matches - therein lies a primary incentive for financing music in many US schools - nor have the staff to be educators in the guise of drill-sergeants. In parenthesis, we might add that whilst in this sense the school would seem atypical, the curriculum is quintessentially American. Here then, are abstracted summaries of five consecutive lessons.

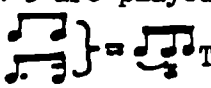
Seated, five nine-year old clarinettists play from Alfred's New Band Method. The teacher stands behind them and plays along. 'Remember the slur on the quarter note,' he says, whereupon he demonstrates, human example being more eloquent than rhetoric. The group plays on, this time remembering the slur. A question and answer session on Italian terms follows. At first few of the players realise the answers are staring them in the face but slowly the truth dawns and each one in turn begins to read from the wallcharts. Using the teaching aids to good effect the teacher qualifies some of the pat answers: 'f is not so much loud', he emphasises, 'as strong', he sings bel canto, 'it's a different concept'. The pupils

smile quizzically. They play again, strong, in tune, but in the final phrase slightly out of time. 'Let's clap three measures before the end. Tap a foot, wiggle an ear, do something to give your body movement'. The players clap then with exaggerated tapping of feet play again. 'Careful of the rests, they're like stop signs', the teacher reminds his pupils. One of their number goes through on red.

Towards the end of the lesson the teacher asks if anyone can see a recurring figure or pattern in the music. Scanning the music for clues the pupils suggest recurring dynamic markings and point to notes of similar pitch, but several minutes pass before one of them realises that the rhythm is constant throughout the piece. 'If you see the similarities', the teacher says, 'it makes it easy'.

In a tiered, purpose-built room the seventh and eighth grade band rehearses National Emblem March. The rows of banked seats allow the players to see clearly the conductor who makes full use of whiteboard and grand piano as well as baton. What takes place is considered more a lesson than a rehearsal, a sort of musical plenary session with the conductor as teacher. Learning is central. After a count in, the band begins to play. Trombones and lower brass are noticeably behind the beat. The conductor casts them a sidelong glance. Separately, section by section, woodwind, brass, then percussion rehearse the same phrase. Each player learns more than his or her own single line part, each one learns to listen and be critical in a large group setting. The atmosphere is intense, no one chats though the trumpeters, more competent than their fellow brass players, begin to fidget when the trombone players let the side down. The principal player being absent, the second trombonist sits uncomfortably in the hot seat. Flautists and clarinettists demonstrate

whilst the rest listen. Conductor: 'Did you hear that energy?' The question is addressed directly towards the trombone section.

A number of seventh and eighth grade players come together to play jazz. A precondition of enrollment is that the players must also play with the wind band, without this many of the more advanced players would want only to play jazz. This proviso is beneficial for the players themselves, who should in any case develop catholicity of taste, and for the wind band opens up the possibility of tackling repertoire on a higher musical plane than would otherwise be the case. This stage band as it is known - and not an inappropriate name either since the music ranges widely from mainstream jazz to rock and pop - meets like the other ensembles in scheduled curricular time. We stay to listen and perforce miss the concert band rehearsal in an adjoining room. It takes some time to adjust to American hyperbole, for instance: 'I'll throw you against the wall and peel you off', is quickly translated for the writer's benefit as 'I'm not at all happy with you'. Students and teacher click through a rosary of one-liners. After the banter, the rehearsal. A summary tune-up and into the first number. The stage band line-up comprises saxes, trumpets and rhythm section: trombones are markedly absent. 'All eighth notes are swung', the teacher says as he writes  on the blackboard. 'Rock' he adds, 'is played like Bach, but in swing  or  are played as if they were triplets with the first of every two tied'.  The music is restarted and swung. Saxes take the lead whilst trumpets hold sustained tones, their notes seem to hang in the air like a rainbow. 'Can you play those long notes a little shorter?' Again the teacher resorts to the blackboard, 'play  as  .' In tandem, accompaniment and melody line are rehearsed until they gel. The band presses on, 'good reading',

says the conductor encouragingly and with that line, after some ten minutes or so of listening, comes the realisation that the players are sight reading. Patricia, the 'piano player', is caught out by one of the more intricate rhythms and there are guffaws of laughter all round. Some of the parts have the pattern ♩♩ ♩♩♩ (3). 'For those of you who don't have the triplet pattern tap two, and say one, two, three'. Instruments are put down and everyone starts to clap two and to count three. 'It's a favourite device of Brahams and of Count Basie' - surely as greater contrast as could possibly be found. Styles are mixed freely and American musicians especially seem to excel at this. There are no barriers nor hard-edged categories to divide, just formal and informal musics. The combined rhythm passage - two against three - is repeated and the conductor is visibly pleased with the performance. 'You've removed the dental floss from my ears', he remarks enigmatically. Next he attends to phrasing, three points are isolated, each in turn demonstrated by syllables: 'da, blip, da; dop, da da; doo-dle'. Trumpets phrase well and their example is copied by saxes and, in turn, piano,bass and drums. Certain notes are stressed, rhythms lifted and places where the band comes together are underlined. Stylistic understanding is achieved by modelling, no one usurps the conventions, there is striking consistency.

On to a 'Suzuki' violin lesson taking place in a small practice room. The familiar tripartite arrangement, pupil, parent and teacher, means that the lessons have to be scheduled carefully, especially with regard to the parent's - usually the mother's - time. Alternating large groups with Suzuki lessons makes for satisfying, workable days. It does not, unlike many timetables, make excessive demands on the teacher's energy. The teacher remains fresh, enthusiastic and patient. She addresses her remarks

to student and parent, explaining not only the what but also the why. Games are invented for almost everything they do, necessary preliminaries are made into exercises, 'I practise my bow grip when I rosin'.

Three small saxophonists convene for their weekly group lesson. One by one they play, each performance more convincing than the last. 'The biggest thrust in music', the teacher opines, 'is rhythm'. The group setting seems to help establish rhythmic playing. In concert the players pick up a definite sense of pulse; individually, they resort to foot tapping. But rhythm is not the only point to which they attend. 'Everything was right but someone', the teacher says looking round the group, 'forgot to put in the computer card. What David was doing was merely playing a series of notes'. The exercise is repeated, this time with more thought given to expression and phrasing. 'Since you played it so well, let's be fussy'. Long and short 'eighth' notes are differentiated, tonguing syllables changed, new phrasings are discussed and the players learn to bend certain notes. They play together and the new phrasings and articulations are repeated; learning is reinforced. It is legitimate to practise the same passage time and time again when there are several players. 'Get your percentage higher', remarks the teacher in the manner of an American football coach. To conclude, they play a piece in seven, after which the teacher regales them with an apocryphal anecdote concerning a musician who when attempting to play in ensemble music in seven time kept adding an extra beat. Cries of 'count seven' from the musician's friends, were answered by 'one, two, three, four, five, six, se-ven!' As the class adjourns one of the pupils is heard in the corridor vigorously recounting the learnt anecdote to friends.

As can be seen from the foregoing group lessons, staff at ASL leaven

instruction with a generous admixture of wry humour. It may not be to everyone's taste but it makes for easy, relaxed pupil-teacher relationships and it takes the stuffiness out of skill learning.

Richard Bassett, Chairman of the Music Department, has wide experience. He has taught in the American Schools in Athens and in Tehran, as well as in public schools at home. Recently he spent a sabbatical year touring schools, teacher training institutions and music colleges in the USA. His initial training course at Oberlin College equipped him for almost any teaching post he might encounter and through recent graduate study in America, at New England Conservatory and Westminster Choir College, he has added to a host of positive skills. His knowledge of the way music teachers are trained both sides of the Atlantic is au courant and his views sharply focused. Many US colleges, he roundly avers, 'are happy to take anyone'. He cites recent research of student admissions to American colleges and draws attention not only to lower IQ levels, but more importantly to inept students wholly incapable of becoming teachers. The qualities for the job, he concedes are difficult to tie down but he believes it crucial that education and music should be studied concurrently. He recounts how during his own training he was regularly assessed for having the requisite qualities and skills of a potential teacher. The crucial assessment took place, he recalls, during his sophomore (second) year when he had to demonstrate he had reached the required standard in twenty-two different skills.

His views on attitude are no less astute. He stresses how careful he is before appointing a teacher at ASL. Indeed, the irrepressible élan of the staff is self-evident. 'Many of us', he reflects, 'are teaching today probably because we idolised our own music teacher, someone who made music

an important part of our lives. Similarly, the children we teach should learn to love their music enough for it to be important to their lives'.

American teachers are supposed to be able to teach most instruments in groups at least to an elementary level. 'Many British teachers', Richard Bassett contends, 'cannot conceive that wind instruments can be taught in groups'. He says, for instance, that often in an attempt to pass on our own stance or to mould the embouchure, we defeat the object by insisting on what amounts to an unnatural posture and perhaps a mouthpiece position totally unsuited to the individual concerned. 'The natural way', he ventures, 'is always the best.' His view would seem to be that rather than impose uniformity, a group teacher should allow greater individuality and personal freedom. He adds that apart from learning to teach groups, 'we have to learn to live and work in groups. Music, after all, is a group discipline. You play to play with others and you learn in the same way.' Indeed, in Britain it is still possible to provoke quite heated arguments by expressing this view, as he has found. He points out that in this country there is still resistance to group teaching approaches; children who want to play music with others have to wait until after school.

Richard Bassett's colleague, Paul Nossiter, feels that because American teachers 'cannot pick and choose their spot' they are generalists, equipped with a broader range of skills rather than highly accomplished in any one skill. He describes the curriculum at ASL as 'loose'. The staff are not bound up with teaching 'O' or 'A' levels so can concentrate on practical matters. 'We don't make the curriculum academic' he says, a Harvard graduate. 'We prefer to play rock not to analyse it.' Analysing rock he regards as a negative act.

He believes American society and education to be more egalitarian than in this country which he claims divides the classes. American society is less divisive, less concerned with separating the sheep from the goats, 'People aren't so categorized' he says, 'Americans are more middle-of-the-road'. Nevertheless, like many a foreign national abroad, he has a sense of perspective and the distance to be able to see pros and cons in the systems of education both in his own country and the country in which he is resident. Casually he quotes, from the anthropologist Margaret Mead, the adage about Americans prolonging their adolescence more than any other people, an adage in which he recognises some measure of truth, but again he sees advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand he dislikes the American fondness for 'fun', razzmatazz, showbiz and popularizers. 'Fun', it seems, in an age of American mass culture and enormous media hype, is a shibboleth for the dilettante. Children see the shining instruments and are immediately attracted but there is, he says, 'a natural attrition'; they fail to realise that playing an instrument requires hard work, 'it cannot be fun all the time'. Perhaps, the British, he ponders, have a different concept of fun.

On the other hand he sees that the latent adolescence to which Mead refers, could, perhaps, manifest itself in the American healthy and enriching mix of musical styles, in potpourri music courses, in seeing substance in the blues of Bessie Smith and frivolity in the music of Offenbach.

Staff at ASL encourage students to keep their ears open to all kinds of mediums, music is seen as a 'forthcoming art'. An analogy is drawn with the Scandinavian smorgasbord where tempting fare is spread before a group of people, each person taking away what most whets his or her own

appetite. Music is about choices. And what of that unlikely pair of partakers, the violinist and the double bass player encountered earlier? 'Well,' replied the teacher without qualms, 'they're roughly the same standard so I have them come together'.

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